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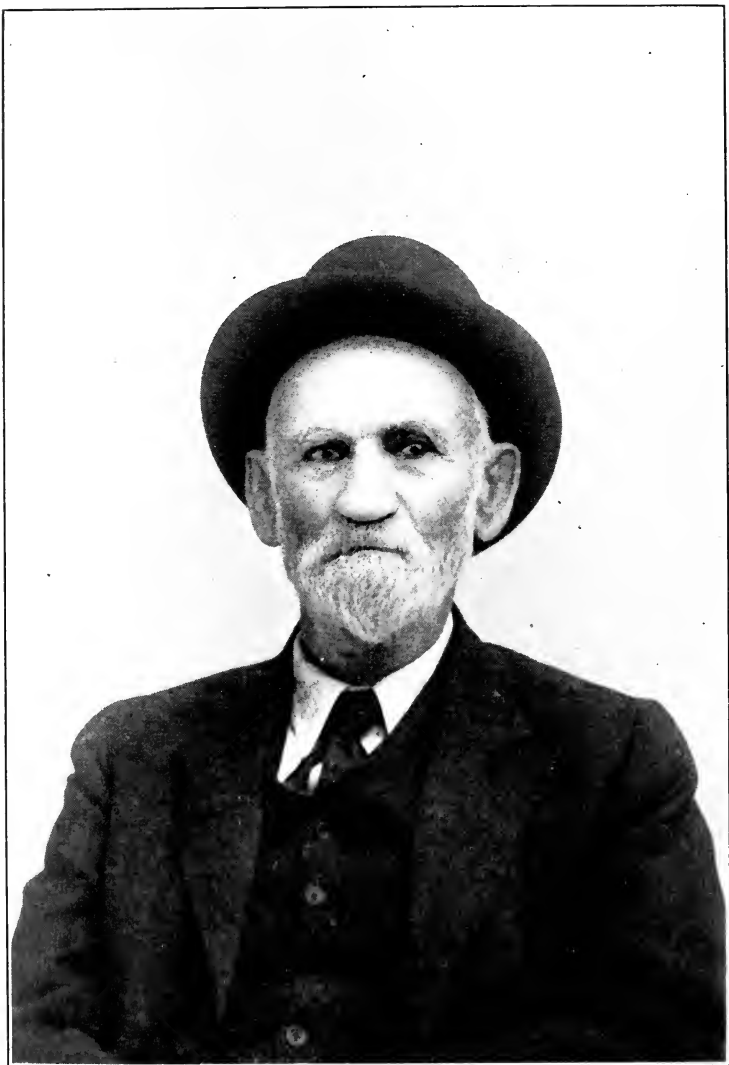
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**RECOLLECTIONS OF A
CALIFORNIA PIONEER**





Carlisle S. Abbott

Frontispiece

RECOLLECTIONS OF A CALIFORNIA PIONEER

BY
CARLISLE S. ABBOTT



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To

my children and my grandchildren
this volume is affectionately inscribed.

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FOREWORD

This book of Recollections was entirely written after I had passed my eighty-eighth birthday, the chief inducement to the undertaking being a desire on my part to leave to my children, my grandchildren, and their posterity a story of my long life.

There will, therefore, be found in these pages some things that will prove of little or no interest to the average reader; but these purely personal passages are, I trust, few in number, and they may be readily skipped.

That all my readers will give full credence to everything that is hereinafter related is more than I can reasonably expect; but this consideration does not militate against the truth of the statement I now make: that, however extravagant, however extraordinary, some of the incidents here referred to may appear, I have endeavored to give a truthful narrative, and that, while the lapse of years and the infirmities of age have doubtless caused my memory to fail in reference to exact dates, distances, directions, and such trifling matters, I have in all the substantials presented the truth.

The term "California Pioneer," in its strict

application, includes only those who reached the State prior to January 1, 1850; and while I do not quite measure up to this standard, I have thought that this acknowledgment may soften the criticism that otherwise would properly follow my appropriation of a label of which those dauntless old heroes have always been so justly proud.

The frequent use I have made of the first personal pronoun singular,—not less offensive to the author than to the reader,—was rendered necessary by the nature of the production; however, as the word makes for brevity, this blemish is in a measure compensated.

Making no pretension to literary excellence, I shall not complain of the criticisms of the learned concerning the literary qualities of this production; for it is just what it purports to be: a plain life history of a plain old man.

CARLISLE S. ABBOTT.

SALINAS, CAL., 1917.

RECOLLECTIONS OF A CALIFORNIA PIONEER

1828-1917

CHAPTER I

EARLY YEARS

IN a large farmhouse on the eastern shore of Lake Memphremagog, about twelve miles north of the line between Canada and Vermont, on the 26th day of February, 1828, I became an inhabitant of this little planet,—over which we crawl for a few short years, much as a lady-bug crawls over a pumpkin,—where we live, and love, and strive, and fight.

Therefore I am a Canadian, although my parents were from Connecticut. They emigrated to Canada when that country was a dense forest, and they had to clear the land of timber, then of stumps. Then a crop of rocks appeared, which had to be dug out and either made into fences or rolled down into the lake. One of my earlier recollections is of Father saying to us three younger boys,—Harvey, Alvin, and Carr:

“Let’s go down to the lake and have some fun rolling rocks down the hill and see them jump into the water.”

Well, it was fun all right, but late in the afternoon we got tired, and Harvey said:

“Look here, Carr, don’t Father mean this for work?”

It did not take long for us to conclude that he did; and we went home.

In the winter, when the snow covered the fences, Father would go to Montreal, eighty miles away, with butter, cheese, and hogs, which were frozen as hard as the ice that covered the lake.

Our house was an old-fashioned affair, one and a half stories high, with a room eighteen or twenty feet square, in which,—not the least of its conveniences,—was a fireplace that would accommodate a log two feet in diameter and four feet long.

The family originally consisted of seven sons and three daughters; but some of my brothers being then of age, had refused to take the oath of allegiance to the British government and had gone to the United States.

When I was quite small, a sister about sixteen years of age picked me up and went romping across this big room with me sitting upon her left shoulder; but she accidentally let my legs slip from beneath her arm; this broke my

hold on her neck, and I went over backward and down to the floor head first. And ever since then I seem to have been, most of the time, either wrong end up, or in the right place at the wrong time.

At the age of eight years my mother died, giving me in charge of an older brother, Abiel. I have no fault to find with Abiel, but he was the greatest worker of any age or country, and cared nothing for amusements. In the winter he would go into the pine woods on some timber contract and leave me with all the chores to do,—feeding stock, milking cows, and chopping open water holes (which used to freeze over every night) for the cattle to drink from, and as this made me late to school, black marks were the result.

On one occasion, when I was seventeen years old, I took the black mare and light wagon and went away three miles, got my best girl, and went to an apple-paring. We pared apples until midnight, had a banquet, and then danced until daylight. The sun was well up when I got home; and I got the scolding of my life.

About two weeks later a neighbor had announced an apple-paring for the afternoon. I told Abiel that my two next older brothers were going and I wanted to go, but he said "No." We were digging potatoes on a rocky hillside, and Abiel remarked that he wanted to

get those potatoes dug before the snow fell, saying, moreover, that I was getting rude and unsteady, and was running around with the girls and did not earn my board. I happened to be picking up potatoes at the time and was about ten feet from him, with about a peck of potatoes in the basket; so I slung it at him with all my strength, and the potatoes went all over him. I broke and ran, and at every jump I made down that hill I thought he was in my last step, but I could not look back, for that would take time. Finally I had to turn a square corner to go around the barn, and, looking back, saw he was standing in the same spot, leaning on his hoe-handle. For years after, whenever I thought of him, whether it was light or after I had closed my eyes at night, I could see him leaning on that hoe-handle, looking after the runaway boy who did not return.

I went to the house, put on my best suit, tied my other clothes up in a bundle, went to the apple-paring, and danced as I had never danced before, for I was not only mad but scared about my present situation,—with no place to go after the dance. I had left the bundle of everyday clothes in the brush along the road, which was all the home I now had; and that infernal poem that I had recited at our evening spelling-school kept running through my head. I can recall but two of these verses:

Pity the sorrows of a poor old man
Whose trembling limbs have borne him to your door,
Whose days are dwindled to the shortest span,
Oh, give relief, and Heaven will bless your store!

These tattered clothes my poverty bespeak,
These hoary locks proclaim my lengthened years,
And many a furrow down my grief-worn cheeks
Has been the channel for a flood of tears.

My two older brothers, Harvey and Alvin, were at the dance, and wanted to know what the blazes was the matter with me to-night, remarking:

“You dance every set and slash the girls around as though they were bundles of straw.”

I told them the whole story. They insisted on my going home with them to breakfast, which I did; and after that I struck out for a job. Finally, after two days' search, I got employment at eight dollars a month until the school opened. Then I went to school and worked for my board nights and mornings.

The following summer I worked for Ralph Merry at Magog. He had a store in town and a farm near by. Wages big,—five dollars per month in cash, and five dollars in trade out of the store! However, I saved money enough to take me to Wisconsin,—the “Far West,” as it was then called,—where I had four brothers, and where I remained until 1850, when I started for California. Brother Alvin and I ran one of those old-fashioned, eight-horse, sweep threshing machines in '48 and '49. This would

not be worth mentioning if it were not for an incident that took place in 1849, while threshing for a man by the name of Fox.

The farmers had to furnish all the help in those days. Fox was a temperance man, and did not allow liquor around if he knew it. Newell, one of the employees, loved it dearly, and he managed to smuggle in a jug of whiskey, got drunk, and fell off the stack. As this put Newell completely out of commission, the grain was not now coming fast enough, and Fox went to get another man to take Newell's place; but soon a white flag was put out of the window to announce that lunch was ready. We were afraid Fox would not be able to get the necessary help, so we tried to wake Newell and get him to the house, thinking a lunch would fix him for the afternoon's work. We shook him, stood him on his head, and tried to shake the whiskey out of him, but without result. At length some one said:

"He is dead, let's bury him." The ground was a sandy loam and easy digging, and we soon had a hole two feet deep at one end and tapering to the surface at the other. We put in some straw, laid Newell in, then put on more straw, then piled on dirt, and patted it down just leaving his face above ground, and went to lunch. On our return Newell was awake, but he could move neither hand nor foot, though he could move his tongue, and he used some

language which, as Bret Harte would say, was "frequent and painful and free." We dug him out and started him for the house. I never expected to help bury him again, but I was called upon to do so the following year.

CHAPTER II

OFF FOR CALIFORNIA

DURING the following winter ('49-'50) brother Alvin and I, attracted like so many others by the reported discoveries of gold in California, determined to go to that land of promise. The usual outfit was a four-horse team and a two-horse wagon, which would carry sufficient supplies for four men, who could mess together.

There were many people taking the trip, and we at length formed connection with two men named Mellon and Vetter. They put up two horses, while Alvin and I contributed a like number,—each man to pay his proportion for the wagon and necessary supplies, and all four to stick together, sick or well, until the “land of gold” should be reached. Two other outfits of the same kind joined us, making a company of twelve, all agreeing to share camp and guard duty on the trip.

We left Beloit, Wisconsin, March 3, 1850. There was a large crowd assembled to see us off, and while shaking hands with wives, sisters, and sweethearts, I slipped over to Dr. Merri-
man's to bid my fiancée Elizabeth good-by, and

give her a smack, without the crowd's looking on.

Nothing of importance occurred during our trip to the Missouri River, which we reached at a point opposite where Omaha is now situated. Here we crossed in a skiff to visit a Frenchman named Sarpie, then the only resident of the now flourishing city of Omaha. He had a large log house and was engaged in trading with the Indians, exchanging knickknacks for peltry. He told us we should not think of crossing the plains with so small a company; that we would need a guard at camp and two men out with the horses, and guard duty would come too often. Furthermore, he said we might have trouble with the Indians and get wiped out; and as to swimming the Platte to lead a band of horses across,—it was full of quicksand that would settle in our clothes and sink us.

We were, however, undismayed by his dire predictions, and upon returning to the east side of the river, the "City of Tents," we found the numerous outfits there assembled discussing the matter of consolidating into companies of from fifty to seventy-five men.

We joined one of these companies, which had a man by the name of Clark for its captain. Clark had been an Indian trader and knew the whole eastern slope of the Rockies as well as the climatic conditions, and he was likewise

familiar with the Indian tribes, their customs and habits.

Our company consisted of fifty-three men. Captain Clark appointed a committee to see that each separate company had a sufficient supply of food, and that each man had a rifle, a pistol and a sufficient supply of ammunition. Without these necessities no man could join our company. One of our number, by the name of Pardee, died of pneumonia the day before we crossed the river, and was buried where now rests the eastern end of the great railroad bridge spanning the river. The fifty-two of us crossed the river on the 20th day of March, and camped near Sarpie's store, and the next morning we started westward over a gently undulating prairie. This ground had been burned over the previous fall, and the new short grass would hardly sustain stock even if it did not have to work, but we each had a few sacks of kiln-dried corn meal for such an emergency, so we were able to move along at about ten or twelve miles a day, until we passed the Loup fork of the Platte, near its junction with that stream.

About twelve miles west of the Missouri we came to a small stream, whose banks were nearly perpendicular and about ten feet apart, and whose depth was about six or nine feet, down to a muddy bottom. Those who had previously passed over this place had cut down the

banks on each side and had crossed by first taking the teams over, then running a wagon down into the stream, and then hitching a chain to the tongue and pulling the wagon out. Captain Clark said that it would take until dark to get our outfits across in that way, and told us we had better turn our teams out and build a bridge.

There was a clump of cottonwood trees about three hundred yards up the stream, and here we cut four logs, about eighteen feet long and one foot in diameter, for stringers; then we cut poles and brush for covering, and by dusk the bridge was completed and ready for use. Two years later I crossed the same bridge with ox teams.

We rolled out early next morning in order to reach the Loup before nightfall, as the fire had not burned the country to the west of that stream, and the feed there was good. We had traveled some six or eight miles when Captain Clark, who had gone ahead on horseback, came back on the run, shouting:

“Go into camp quick! Put the wagons in a circle. Lash the tongue of one wagon to the inside hind-wheel of the next, forming a corral.”

“What—What the blazes is the matter?” a dozen voices cried.

“There is a red blanket spread across the road a few rods ahead,” replied Clark.

This was a signal for a big laugh.

“Can’t we drive over a blanket, or throw it out of the way, or drive around it?”

“No; it is an Indian notice that they want a parley,—a friendly talk with the captain of this company, and if we drive over the blanket, it is to defy them; while if we throw it to one side or drive around it, it means that we ignore them; so get into camp quick, and we will soon see a messenger.”

This satisfied us that Clark understood Indian customs better than we did, so we rushed to form the corral, and before the horses were out to graze, six Indians sprang to their feet from a low swag in the plain about two hundred yards away. Clark beckoned them to approach, which they did. One of them spoke broken English. He said:

“Big Pawnee Chief wants to see your chief.”

“What for? What does he want?” replied Clark.

But the messengers did not know,—or pretended not to know. They said he was at the river “four or five miles away, no more.”

“All right,” returned Clark; “you go to the village. Go fast. I come.”

He then called to his partner Newcomb to saddle and come on; and the two kept close to the Indians’ heels until the village was reached.

The Chief’s tepee was like all the others but larger. Clark and Newcomb rode in front of

the big tepee and dismounted, and the Chief came out. He was a tall, robust man, slightly gray, and could speak English fairly well. He said:

“You Chief of big train?”

“Yes,” replied Clark. “Me Chief. What do you want?”

“Well,” said the Indian, “you eat my grass. It makes game go away, and you kill my game.”

It is considered by the Indians to be very rude to interrupt an Indian Chief when he is talking, and Clark waited until he was through, before saying:

“You have no grass, the fire burned it up. We have been in your country only two days, and have seen no game, and we do not want your game. We have plenty of meat, but we want grass when it grows. Now what do you want?”

“Well,” answered the Chief, “I want two plugs of tobacco, four pounds of sugar in lumps, twenty pounds of flour and meal, three brass rings for my three wives to wear on their wrists, and lots of jews-harps for the babies.”

“All right,” said Clark. “Send men to get it.”

He had written down the articles and had then started back for the train. Four Indians on their ponies followed, and the articles demanded were contributed by our outfits. But before our teams were ready to start there were

at least one hundred men, boys, and girls there with leggins, belts, hat-bands and buckskin purses and moccasins to trade for trinkets, brass rings, jews-harps and lump sugar,—as they called it. The Beloit outfit had nearly a peck of jews-harps, and we traded the most of them off. And talk about music!—it would have drowned the crack of a rifle. Clark told us not to give the Indians anything.

“Make them give you something in exchange, no matter what. If you give to them, they think you do it because you are afraid of them.”

We finally got rid of the savages and were again on our way, reaching the Loup after dark, having made the trip laid out in the morning. We had not made enemies of the Indians, and this was very important, as their territory extended for about two hundred miles west of where we were. We drove into a grove of oak and sycamore on the bank of the Loup, and put a guard of three men out with the horses and one man to guard camp. There was plenty of dry wood near, but it was too dark to get it; so we ate a cold bite, pitched our tents, and went to bed and to sleep on this our second night in the Indian country.

At sunrise we were up and at work cutting wood, cooking, feeding horses, and attending to the other camp duties. When we got out of bed on this third day, we saw close to us Joe Bowers' wagon-train from Missouri, which, by

reason of the darkness, had not been visible when we camped the night before. On one side of one of the wagons was the original song of "Joe Bowers," the first verse of which ran:

"My name it is Joe Bowers,
I have a brother Ike,
We are from old Missouri,
All the way from Pike."

CHAPTER III

THE VALLEY OF THE PLATTE

WE got started in good time and at noon reached the Platte, where we found the feed much better. That part of the country had not been burned over, and as the old grass protected the new, the horses ate both together, and the combination made fairly good feed.

Nothing of importance happened for several days, the feed, however, getting better all the time. There were wagon-trains all along the road on both sides of the Platte, and everybody was banging away at the buffalo, scaring them away, or killing them and cutting out choice pieces and leaving the rest to rot, while the Indians and their wives and children were starving. It was the most flagrant injustice this Government ever permitted its people to practice. The lines between the different tribes were as distinctly marked as the boundaries between the different States of the Union, each of these tribes claiming the ownership of all the game within its borders, while recognizing the similar claims of other tribes, and they looked upon the emigrants as a white tribe in-

fringing upon their rights. Indeed I could not have blamed them if they had cleaned out the whole white tribe within their borders, for they had owned and occupied these lands long before Uncle Sam was born, yet I was not ready to go for the fault of others. We shudder at the massacre of the whole nation of Armenians by the Turks, but no pen can describe the misery and despair of a Pawnee village,—of men, women and children dying of hunger,—while the white tribe was killing, or scaring their game off into the mountains, and I say that our Government here caused as much misery by negligence as the Turks have by savagery.

The next trouble we had was with cholera. It struck the tide of emigration like a cyclone, and on both sides of the Platte. The dates on little headboards along the road were from one to three days old, which showed us that if we had been three days' drive farther west,—or about seventy-five miles,—we would have been ahead of the epidemic; but as all the other trains ahead of us were moving as fast as we could, we simply kept along with the disease. We had just reached that stretch of country where for two hundred miles there was not a stick of timber larger than a whipstock, and where buffalo chips must needs be used for fuel, when John Newell, whom I had helped once to bury in Wisconsin, died of cholera. He had with him two brothers,—from eighteen to

twenty-two years old,—and received the best of care and the skill of a good doctor. He was convalescent, but trouble unlooked for was in the air; black angry clouds along the east foot of the Rockies, with vivid streaks of lightning, were seen approaching, to take the place of the hot sultry air.

“Get into camp!” yelled Clark. “Place the wagons in V form, the point towards the west, and tie every horse inside the V.”

This done, some of the men commenced to put up tents.

“Hold on there,” cried the captain. “No tent will stand what is coming. Spread your tents over the front of the wagons to keep the wind from tearing the tops off. Tie them down to the forward wheels.”

This was barely done when the wind and rain struck us with such force that several men, who were not clinging to the wagon wheels, were knocked down and a number of wagon covers went away in the breeze; but, fortunately, they were carried over a perpendicular bank of the Platte on to a low bar, where they were recovered the following day.

Among the wagons that lost their covers was John Newell's, and the rain was falling on him by bucketfuls. We lifted him out of the wagon, bed and all, and put him under it; but this did not better the matter. The wind and rain came with such force that he was as wet as though

he had just been pulled out of the river. The blizzard did not moderate until near morning, and meantime we clung to the back end of the wagons, as wet as water could make us.

During the previous day five men had gone out into the low hills to the north to get a buffalo. They had killed one and had just got it packed on their horses when the blizzard struck them. They got separated and lost their way. Just before sunrise two of them came into camp, two more about ten o'clock, and the last one at noon. All had thrown away their meat.

It was a busy day repairing wagon-tops and drying clothes. Newell had taken a relapse, and the doctor said he would surely die. The following morning, when we were ready to start, the doctor said John would not be alive in one hour from that time, and as no train stopped for a man to die, Clark asked me and my friend Phillips to stop and help the Newell brothers to bury him. We went just back of his tent, and we started to dig a grave; but as only one could work at a time we changed every few minutes, and though we made the dirt fly, John was ready before we had finished. We lowered him down, bed and all, and spread an extra pair of blankets over him, filled the grave, and placed a piece of board, from the foot-board of the wagon, at the head of his last resting-place, and upon this we wrote his name, former place of residence, and cause of death.

And I presume the Nebraska farmers have been raising wheat over that spot for the last sixty-five years.

While we were saddling our horses, the two brothers came, thanked us and said good-by.

"Why good-by?" asked Phillips. "We will travel together and overtake the train in camp by eight to-night."

"No," they replied; "we are going back."

And they went, so our train of fifty-two was now reduced to forty-nine.

Phillips and I found our train in camp at nine o'clock that night. On the way we counted the graves made the day before, and were surprised to find there were thirteen of them. While the blizzard had killed many, it had also cleared the atmosphere, and checked the epidemic to a great extent. Here there was no wood for fuel, and as the buffalo chips were soaked to the center, we could not burn them; but we did not mind the absence of a fire, as we were prepared with all sorts of bread, sea biscuit, crackers, chipped beef, and so on, and were happy, for the grass was now fine.

One afternoon as we neared the western edge of this treeless region, we saw directly in front of us a clump of trees, which was a welcome sight, for we would camp beneath the spreading branches and probably find some dry wood. It proved to consist of about eight or ten big cot-

tonwoods in a low swag in the plain. We drove under them, delighted.

The horses were started off for the river for their evening drink by their caretakers for the night, and we were all busy with our evening's work when some one said:

"Where in blazes does that stench come from? Have we camped by the carcass of a buffalo?"

All stopped and looked about. Soon some one yelled:

"Look in the top of these trees!"

All faces were turned in that direction, and there in the tops of those trees was the explanation. It was an Indian cemetery. We did not stop to hitch the horses, but twelve or fifteen men would take hold of a wagon and run it off to windward about one hundred and fifty yards, then go for another, and we soon had tents pitched and fires of buffalo chips burning. It was the custom of the tribe, through whose country we were now passing, to wrap a corpse in a green buffalo hide and lash it to the branches of the largest trees that could be found. In the lapse of time the sun, the wind, and the rains would break the lashing, so that here and there would be a skull, a hand, or a shrunk shank sticking out. Bah, what a camping place!

We had now traveled nearly four hundred miles in the valley of the Platte,—a plain almost level and from ten to fifteen miles wide, low

grassy hills to the north, the river on the south, with steep bluffs close to the river. Looking east or west, the only thing to be seen, except grass, was emigrant trains every few miles, the farthest being mere dots in the distance, or an Indian village by the river. But a wonderful change has come around during the lifetime of those weary plodders, and there are few left to tell the story.

It was several years before this country was settled, on account of the scarcity of timber, except near the Missouri River. Then a railroad was built, and settlers could get coal at the stations, and the Government gave a certain sum for every tree that was planted and properly cared for until it was five years old.

Then the counties took it up and offered a reward for the man that planted the greatest number of trees during a specified time. In the spring of the year this reward was graduated into first, second, third, and fourth prizes.

Result: Now, looking up or down this plain,—either from the hills on the north or the high bluffs on the south,—a change from savage to civilized life is seen.

The farmers have fuel, fencing material, and wind-breaks; white cottages shine through the open glades in the timber, where roses bloom,

“And olive yards and orchards green
Along that once drear plain are seen.”

The black smoke from the oil burners along the railroad has succeeded the smoke that curled from the tops of the Indian tepees along the river, and the shriek of the locomotive has taken the place of the crack of the ox-whip.

A few days after leaving the Indian cemetery we reached a point on the Platte opposite Fort Laramie.

CHAPTER IV

SWIMMING THE PLATTE

HERE we had to cross the river, and one hundred miles farther southwest we had to cross back again, on account of a mountain that butted up against the river on the north side. It was generally supposed that there was no pass through this mountain for wagons, yet there was, but the inhabitants of Fort Laramie, with their stores, blacksmith shops, and ferrymen, were determined to keep this a secret, as there was five dollars a wagon charged for crossing the river, besides the other trade that could be gathered in. The ferry carried wagons only, and we had to cross with our horses about two hundred yards above the ferry, there being at that point a good place to enter the stream, and a similar place to leave it on the other side. The river was about a half-mile wide, running quicksand and ice water from the melting snow of the Rockies. It should here be stated that it is very difficult to get a band of horses to cross a stream where they are compelled to swim, and it is practically impossible to do so, unless they have a leader to show them the way

over. I had one horse named Pompey (Pomp), a big, sturdy, black animal, which had been bred and raised near Beloit, on the Rock River. He was accustomed to the water, and was not only a very rapid but a very strong swimmer, his extra girth holding him well up on the surface. I had used him to lead the band in crossing the Cedar, the Des Moines, and the Loup rivers, but I now refused to lead the band across the Platte, as I thought I had done my share; so I told Captain Clark to get some one else.

We first put the horses in the river three times, and each time, having no leader, they came back on the same side. The wagons had all been carried across on the ferry, and as no one would undertake to lead the horses, I finally consented to try it. We took the horses farther up-stream for a new attempt. The place selected for the start looked the same as below,—shallow at the shore and then down gradually to deep water,—but when Pomp stepped off the low bank he went down out of sight, and I with him. When we came to the surface my hat, which was the only garment I had on when I entered the water, was sailing merrily downstream and may be going yet, for all I know. I grabbed Pomp by the tail with my left hand, and in order not to encumber him with my weight, I used my feet in swimming. In my right hand I held a long stick, with which I kept tapping him on the nose on the down-river side,

so as to make him lay quartering up-stream. The other horses, were rushed in as soon as I was fairly started, and with the band about twenty feet behind me, we went all right until we reached about the middle of the river. At this point the horses, frightened at some floating object in the water, stampeded, and before I realized the danger, they were practically on top of me, and one of them, reaching over my head and to Pomp's back, forced both Pomp and myself beneath the surface of the murky waters.

Without a leader, the band now stopped and began to "mill" (go around and around in a close pack), while old Pomp and I were underneath, among their flying feet. I managed to get hold of the mane of one horse, and squeezed my head above the pack, which was now moving rapidly down-stream with the current. It did not require long for me to take in the situation. The river at this point followed a straight course to the eastward, but about half a mile below the ferry it turned abruptly toward the south. The current, of course, did not turn around this curve, but kept straight ahead and impinged on the east side against a perpendicular bank fifteen or twenty feet high, from which great chunks of earth were falling, as the current struck and undermined it, while nearby were whirlpools and eddies that would quickly swamp and drown any land animal. I feared that the entire band of horses, as well as the

leader, would be lost in these swirling waters, and as I was powerless to do anything to prevent this, I determined to save myself, if possible, though the chance seemed slim enough.

I knew that if I attempted to swim directly toward the shore the horses would overtake me in a few seconds and we would all go into the whirlpool together. I scrambled onto the back of one horse and then stepped from one to another, as a boy would cross over a lot of logs in a pond, until I reached the one farthest down the stream. I then dived into the river and swam rapidly down-stream under water as long as I could hold my breath. Upon coming to the surface I looked back for the horses. Old Pomp had got to the surface, and upon seeing a lot of government horses upon the other side of the river, which had evidently been driven there to decoy the band, was heading for the shore and I now knew that the horses were safe, but how about Carr Abbott?

It is a matter of common knowledge that when a stream is rising it is higher in the middle and lowest at the shores, while the situation is just the reverse when it is falling; and in the case of a large river the extent of the difference will very much surprise one who has never before actually observed it. The Platte was now a raging torrent, yet it was in fact falling, and I therefore had against me the additional circum-

stance that I was in a considerable depression, or trough, from which I had to "climb out."

It takes me some time to write it, but it took only a few seconds for me to think and act. I placed my body quartering up-stream, in order to get the aid of the current in driving me shoreward, and here made the most desperate struggle for life I ever had. There was a clump of willow brush just above the turn in the river to which I have referred, and I concluded that I must reach that clump of brush or there was absolutely no hope of my reaching shore at all. I realized also that the ice water in which I had now been floundering for some time was rapidly sapping my vitality, and I fought as only a drowning man can fight. There were about twenty soldiers following along the bank and throwing anything and everything they could get hold of out into the water for me to grasp. I yelled to them to stop, as I had to cross the current and my progress would be impeded by anything in my way, while my getting hold of any floating object would not assist me to the shore. In passing the willow brush, by probably the longest "reach" I ever made, I caught hold of a twig not larger than a lead pencil; but it held. And by pulling it down I was able to catch it higher up where it was larger, and in two or three more grabs I had hold of it where it was two inches in diameter, and was saved.

The soldiers beat their way through the brush, and as they were unable to reach me directly, they quickly cut off the limb to which I was clinging and drew me to the bank. I was, of course, as stiff as a poker, and was altogether unable to stand; but they carried me to an Indian tepee nearby, and the squaw spread a buffalo robe by the fire, while the soldiers rubbed me until I was able to walk.

In the meantime Brother Alvin had crossed the river, bringing my clothes with him. These were quickly put on, and as our train was now passing, I climbed into the wagon. The grass was so short hereabouts that we drove on up the river about two miles and went into camp in a grove on the river bank, where we found plenty of dry wood, and of course an abundance of the roiled water of the Platte. In addition to the little fires that were used by the different messes for cooking, we had a big log-fire, around which we sat and discussed the situation.

There was, of course, the usual growling and grumbling among the dissatisfied. Under the restraint of friends and society, men behave fairly well, but away from that influence, if there is any cussedness in them, it is bound to come to the surface. Some of our company said we were going too slowly and the gold would all be dug out of California before we got there; others said we were going too fast and we would kill our horses and not get there at all,

unless we got there on foot. Clark, who was sitting on a stump, after listening to this complaining for a while finally got up and said:

“I have heard all the growl I am going to hear. To-morrow morning I start with my two teams at the usual time, and all who want to go faster, get up early and be off; those who want to go slower, fall in behind, but I want to tell you something you probably have not thought of: We shall have to swim back over the Platte, and probably the Green will have to be ferried and swum, and if there are three companies, there will have to be three men to swim to lead the band, and the probabilities are that Carr Abbott will do no more swimming. Good night.”

And he went to his tent.

Not a word more was said, but next morning we all rolled out together.

The two streams of emigration,—that which crossed the Missouri at St. Joseph below the mouth of the Platte and that which reached Laramie from the north,—had now merged, and as the ferry at the upper crossing could not handle the outfits as fast as they came, it was necessary to register with the ferryman, and for each train to take its turn. In this situation Clark sent Newcomb on horseback to make the one hundred and twenty-five miles' distance to the ferry, with instructions to make the trip as fast as his horse could carry him. Arriving at

the ferry, Newcomb informed the ferryman that he wanted to register the Clark Company of ten wagons.

“Where is your company?” asked the ferryman.

“Just down the river, a bit outside this crowd, where the feed is better than it is here,” said Newcomb.

Our train was at once registered, although it was nearly one hundred miles away, and as a result of this foresight on the part of Clark, we had to wait but three days at the ferry. The next train ahead of us was from Kentucky and had about eighty head of horses. Our horses were in a close band just behind, with all hands standing around them, ready to move as soon as the Kentuckians were out of the way. They put their horses into the river several times, but they came out on the same side each time. Then a big, stout rider, mounted with saddle, bridle, big spurs, clothes, and all, rode into the river, and the remainder of the horses followed; but the leader sank lower and lower and finally, when a little more than half-way across, both man and horse went out of sight and were not seen again; but the balance of the horses crossed over all right.

I was now undressing to take our band across, when brother Alvin and Phillips came to me and begged me not to make the attempt; but I had learned how to swim rivers and now had no

fears. I took the precaution this time to leave my hat with brother Alvin, for there was no place nearer than Salt Lake City where I could get another one if I lost this. Again I got old Pomp out into the stream, and with a long stick I guided him, holding his tail with my left hand when tapping his nose with the stick, and carrying the stick between my teeth when not guiding him, thus enabling myself to use one hand and both feet in swimming. If the band got within thirty feet of me, I would give old Pomp a crack with my long stick, and he would draw away from the others. When his forefeet struck the long beach on the opposite bank, I mounted him and rode up the bank, the band following, while the men on the other shore sang or yelled:

“One more river to cross!”

On the following day we reached the Sweetwater, a tributary of the Platte, and were now in the South Pass of the Rocky Mountains. The South Pass, so-called, is a little over twenty miles wide, and is a gently undulating grassy plain until the summit is reached, over one hundred miles west. The river runs close to the north side of this plain, at the foot of a long spur of the Rockies, which is for the greater part of the way almost perpendicular. On the south the mountain is not so steep, but, as it slopes to the north, the canyons and benches were covered with snow.

There was one man in our company by the

name of Losee. He was the oldest member of our company, and rather illiterate. He had two sons,—one about eighteen years of age, the other about twenty. When we were well up toward the summit and were one evening sitting around the big camp-fire talking about the snow on the opposite side of the plain, old Losee finally could stand it no longer, and he called us a pack of damned fools for our reference to this snow, saying: "That is white rocks. If it was snow it would melt, for it is at least two thousand feet nearer the sun than it is here, and of course warmer, and would melt."

After the laugh was over, the oldest Losee boy said he would go over there in the morning and get some of that snow in order to convince the old man. Clark, who seldom joined in the camp-fire conversation, said:

"Young man, do not go. That snow is a long way up the mountain after you cross the plain. You could not reach it before sundown; then you would be thirty miles south of here and we would be thirty miles west."

When morning came young Losee was gone. He had not reached us the next morning, but as we were eating lunch, and old man Losee and the younger son were getting ready to go back and try to find him, he came into camp. He was plied with so many questions that he did not try to answer any of them, but just said:

"Jim, give me something to eat."

At two o'clock that afternoon (about June 25th) we reached the summit, where we stopped and took a good look at the western slope of the backbone of the Continent. The country was rough and in the distance looked black, being covered with grease wood and wild sage, with isolated glades of grass and numerous peaks of volcanic slag. The second night on the west side we camped on the bank of a small stream called the Big Sandy, a tributary of the Green River. Our camp locator had found a nice patch of grass, about a mile and a half to the north of the road, and was at the little stream awaiting our coming.

CHAPTER V

THE GRAY WOLF

FROM the time we crossed the Sweetwater until we reached Salt Lake we were compelled to put out a guard of four men every night, to protect our horses from the attacks of the big gray wolves with which that country was infested. A smaller number of men would not engage in this service because of the danger, and upon the particular night to which I am now to refer, I was to be one of the herders.

The three men who were to accompany me got started ahead of me, and before I reached the feeding ground, which was distant about two miles from our camp, a thick fog had drifted in, making it impossible to see any considerable distance.

It was rather a calm night, although there was a slight breeze blowing, and as it was not yet cold, I carried my overcoat on my arm. I also had a six-shooter and a government musket (powder and ball), and, in an endeavor to locate my companions, I fired the musket, but, getting no response, I reloaded the musket and started back (as I supposed) toward camp. I should

have gone south, but, as I afterwards ascertained, I actually was traveling due west, and instead of reaching our camp, or the Emigrant Road, the course I took was parallel to that road. The night was very dark, and, while I was always hoping to reach camp or the road, I was puzzled by the distance I apparently had covered without reaching either.

Suddenly, about midnight, I heard the howl of a wolf, and it almost froze me in my tracks. I could not tell the distance from which this dreadful sound came, but I judged it to have been perhaps a mile. I knew that when one of these animals either sights or scents game he dares not attack alone, he howls for assistance, and immediately starts toward the game. Very soon I heard another wolf, somewhat farther away, answer and apparently start in the direction of the leader. I stopped and listened, and presently I heard wolves howling from five or six different points, and apparently getting nearer.

There was, of course, not a tree in this whole region, and not thinking of anything better to do, I started to run, yet not knowing where, for the night was by this time so dark that I could not see twenty feet before me. I stumbled along as best I could over the short brush, and at length ran directly into a clump of grease wood, whose short, stiff thorns badly scratched my

hands and face, before I fell headlong over a clump of wild sage.

The howling of the wolves, which was incessantly kept up, now indicated with certainty that the pack was concentrating, and as it grew more distinct, I knew that the beasts of prey were rapidly approaching their supper feast. I had run perhaps half a mile and by this time was panting perceptibly; I was quite exhausted, and my underclothing was soaked with perspiration, caused not perhaps so much by my exertions as by the imminent danger with which I was threatened.

As I had kept warm by running, I still carried my overcoat on my arm, and now, in order to lighten my load, I dropped it. In addition to lightening my load the dropping of my overcoat had another effect, for very shortly I heard the wolves tearing it and snarling over it, and this delayed them for a few moments in their pursuit. I quickly concluded that it was of no use to run farther, that it was inevitable I must fight it out sooner or later; and I thought that if I could get my breath before they reached me, and could succeed in killing one of them, they might follow their well-known habit of pouncing upon and devouring their dead or wounded fellow, which might afford me an opportunity of escape,—although I knew not how.

I immediately got down to a slow walk, and I had not gone a dozen steps when I found be-

fore me one of those volcanic upheavals which I have heretofore mentioned. There was a crevice or break in this not more than four feet wide at the entrance, and into this I quickly stepped.

The width of this break or crevice was such that I could be attacked but from one side, and I felt that, at the least, I would have the satisfaction of killing one or more of my pursuers before they reached me, and if they stopped to devour the slain, some way out might be found for me; although it must be conceded that my prospects looked dismal enough.

It should be remembered that this was before the day of repeating weapons. Had I been armed with a modern Winchester, the contest would have been unequal enough, but I would still have had a chance; with weapons, however, that could be reloaded only by means of powder and ball, the situation was, of course, altogether different.

I did not stop at the entrance of this crevice, but kept on walking along it, though unable to see either where it stopped or whither it led. It was quite steep, and got narrower as I advanced, until I presently found my progress almost shut off by a big rock jutting out about two feet from the one side into the crevice. I found that by rolling a rock about eighteen inches in diameter against its perpendicular side, I was able to get my hands on the upper

edge. Placing my rifle and pistol on top of the rock, I drew myself up as quickly as I could.

It proved none too soon; for I had hardly reached my perch when this pack of timber wolves,—fifteen or twenty in all,—came rushing up the crevice. They immediately located my position, and during the entire night they were one after another continually making the most desperate attempts to reach the top of the rock upon which I was perched, falling back each time with snarls of rage.

Why did I not shoot? There were two reasons. In the first place it was now bitter cold, and my fingers were so stiff that it would have been difficult, if not quite impossible, to reload, and, again, I thought that by some possibility one more agile than the rest might reach my place of refuge, and I kept my weapons loaded for such an emergency. In order to keep from freezing, I would rest the muzzle of the rifle on the rock, and, holding the breech in my hand, would “slap” the soles of my shoes upon the hard stone; then I would lay the rifle down and “slap” my arms around my body. And during all this time the wolf orchestra played on in the pit below me, with the glaring eyes of those fifteen or twenty gray devils, like balls of fire, for footlights.

It does not take long to tell this harrowing experience, but it was by far the longest and bitterest night of my life. I got very tired of

this hard work which was necessary to keep me from freezing, for I was eight thousand feet above sea level,—where there is frost every night of the year,—a cold wind was blowing, my garments were soaked, and it seemed as if daylight would never, never come. I thought there must be something wrong with the world-machinery, that the planet must have jumped a cog; but blessed daylight did come at last, and with its coming the cowardly pack of devils,—which had tortured me for what seemed to be an age,—slunk away.

Assuring myself that they had abandoned the attack, I got down from my perch and made my way to the summit of this *kopje*, as they would call it in South Africa. It proved to be about forty or fifty feet high, three hundred feet wide and about one hundred and fifty yards long with perpendicular sides, a mass of volcanic slag.

I immediately looked for the smoke of some camp fire, or the dust from a passing train, but, as it proved, I had completely lost my bearings, and was, in fact, looking north instead of south. Finally, upon turning around, I saw at some distance the dust from a passing train, but could not see the train itself, because of the roughness of the country. It was not yet sun-up and it seemed to me that this train was headed eastward; but I was in a mood for investigating,—hungry, tired, and with the bottoms of my

feet covered with blood blisters,—so I hobbled toward this passing streak of dust nearly two miles away.

It proved to be a small train of three wagons (ox teams) and a small band of loose cattle, with two men on horseback driving the cattle. I hailed them and inquired if they had given up their California trip, and were going back to the States. They eyed me a few seconds. Then one of them said:

“Young man, you are lost. We are going west. Don’t you belong to the Clark outfit?”

“Yes, I do,” I replied.

“Well,” said he, “all the men of your company, except the Captain and doctor, are out hunting for your bones. They heard a big pack of wolves after you last night, and believe that you were surely killed.”

He then told me it was about six miles back to where our camp was, and for me to keep the road, even if it did look like going west to me. Well, of all the distance for six miles’ walk! The night had surely been long, but those miles seemed to me like a hoop without an end.

Finally, upon reaching the crest of a little ridge, I came in sight of our camp, and observed Clark standing by the camp fire. As soon as he caught sight of me he got his rifle and fired it, that being the signal they had agreed upon in case my bones were found. They were all sure I was dead, and there was of course not one

chance in a thousand of finding anything of one's remains in that rough, sage-brush country.

On reaching camp I drank a cup of coffee, and lying down in our tent, went to sleep. The doctor came in, pulled off my shoes, bathed my feet and cut open the blood blisters, without even awakening me during the operation. Phillips soon came in from the search and asked Clark who had found my bones, and if they had been brought in.

"Yes," answered Clark; "they are brought in. They are in that tent. Take a look at them."

Phillips threw back the flap of the tent and took a look. He came back grinning, and said:

"Well, I'll be d——! Who found him?"

CHAPTER VI

WESTWARD

WHEN we reached Salt Lake City, the Clark Company broke up into the original six companies of which it had been composed, each consisting of from six to twelve men.

Our company consisted of Bemis, Mellon, Vetter, Nathan Baker, Ben Baker, Job Strange, Phillips, Casey, Redington, the doctor, whose name I never knew, my brother Alvin, and myself,—its original members.

From Salt Lake City there were two routes westward, the main traveled road around the north end of the lake, and the other, called the "Southern Route," around the south end of the lake,—the southern being about one hundred miles shorter than the main road, but necessitating the crossing of a ninety-mile desert. Both routes again merged at the Carson River. Two or three of the companies went by the shorter route, while our company determined to take the main traveled way.

One of the companies that took the shorter route was composed of a man by the name of Marsh, another by the name of Allen, and four

other men whom Allen and Marsh had taken into their company upon the payment of a stipulated sum of money. Marsh was a short, thick-set man, and as tough as a pine nut, while Allen was over six feet tall, rather slim, and was, moreover, the most profane man who ever honored me with his acquaintance.

Happening to meet Marsh in Sacramento two years later, I asked him how he got along on the ninety-mile desert. He replied:

“Bad.”

He then told me that they had started out early in the morning expecting to get across the desert by the following morning, but, as teams do not travel as fast by night as they seem to, their expectations were disappointed, and by eleven o'clock of the following morning all their horses lay dead in their tracks, and the canteens were empty; that they had then taken a small quantity of food from their wagons and started for the shore (as the edge of the desert was called), intending to refresh themselves at the big spring and then return to their outfit, removing and taking away with them all the food they could carry; that while the road was good and hard, being composed of mixed sand and salt, it gleamed and glistened in the sun, and the heat was as vicious as it was bewildering, and finally Allen and one of the other men dropped to the ground exhausted, when, to the

amusement of all the others, Allen began to pray:

“O Lord Almighty, send us just one drop of rain!”

Immediately from a few fleecy clouds scattering raindrops began to fall, and as Allen and his companion had a rubber blanket, they quickly spread it out. But not a sufficient quantity of water fell to admit of its running together.

“The damphool,” said Marsh; “might just as well have prayed for a barrel of water as for a drop, for he got ten times as much as he asked for.”

Marsh and the other three men reached the spring, and after resting a few minutes, filled their canteens and started back. When the cool of the evening set in Allen and his companion were revived and had started on, and a little after dark they were met by Marsh and the others, were given water, and then all returned to the wagon, only to find that some thieving emigrant had stolen everything that was eatable. Taking their rifles, they returned to the water, filled their canteens, and now, without an ounce of food, again took up the trail for “the land of gold,”—the distance to the junction of the roads, where it would be possible to procure food, being nearly three hundred miles. On the way they shot a sage hen, a prairie dog, and two pigeons, all of which were quickly de-

voured, and thus they poked along, with a cane in each hand, until they reached the junction where they obtained food from the traders located there.

Having disposed of Marsh's difficulties, I now return to my own.

By the time we reached the Humboldt River cholera had broken out among the emigrants; and here our real trouble commenced, for my brother Alvin was stricken.

We laid over here for a day, in order to rest our horses and to do what we could for Alvin. Our partners, Mellon and Vetter, had thus far kept the original compact made by us in Wisconsin; but in the face of the present difficulties the "yellow streak" in both of their compositions manifested itself, for they declared that they were going to take their horses and their half of our supplies and go on, magnanimously offering to leave the tent for the use of my sick brother.

"Yes," said I, "but how about our agreement to stick together, sick or well, until we reached California?"

They replied by saying that if they remained there five or ten days the provisions might give out, and again declared that they were going to pack their horses and leave.

"That," I said, "is exactly what I would do if I were like you; but if you were in my place and I in yours, I would continue right along

taking my turn at camp duty and caring for the sick." Then I added: "When you were in Wisconsin and under the restraint of law and the influence of friends and society, you were good fellows, but here, where there is neither law nor society, your natural cussedness comes to the surface, and you care for no one but yourselves."

I further reminded them that I had swum every river to lead the horses, that I had remained behind to dig a grave and bury the dead, and had been compelled to travel in the night to overtake the train, while they had lain comfortably in their tent, and added:

"And now, with my brother at the point of death, you propose to break up the team and desert us four hundred miles from our journey's end."

The doctor, who had been listening to our conversation, here interjected:

"Mr. Mellon, you certainly will not break up the team and leave the Abbott boys in this fix. I have heard enough of this rot."

But Mellon replied:

"Well, I am going."

Mellon and Vetter proposed to make a pair of pack saddles and, as there was no other material at hand, I suggested that they use for this purpose one of the front wheels of our wagon and a piece of the wagon box, which sug-

gestion was met by several of the men standing by with the remark:

“Carr, I would not give the scamps anything.” But the two deserters took the wheel, and after I had cut the wagon bed in halves they used some of the discarded boards, completed their pack saddles and got away at sundown, evidently not desiring to camp amid such uncongenial surroundings. I never saw nor heard of either of these worthies again.

Of course I could not expect the other six men of our party to delay here on account of Alvin's sickness,—for they were under no obligation to do so, not having been parties to the original agreement to “stick together, sick or well,”—and the doctor suggested that I construct a cart out of the hind wheels of the wagon, so that Alvin could be carried, and we could go along with them. The doctor added that Alvin would be more liable to recover under his care than lying here in a hot tent. I adopted this suggestion, and from another company camped nearby I borrowed a saw, which was not only dull but was of the *cross-cut* variety, and with this *cross-cut* saw I *ripped* the dry, hard wagon-tongue into strips, which I roughly fashioned into shafts, in order that I might work one of our horses at a time.

As it was necessary for me to give Alvin medicine every hour, and as I had no right to delay the departure of the rest of our company,

I did not go to bed that night, but worked upon this cart and finished it at about three o'clock in the morning. I had now been two days and nearly two nights without sleep, and, to use a present-day expression, I was "all in." So, after giving Alvin his medicine, I sat down to rest, and fell asleep.

Because of my being at work that night, it was not thought necessary to have a guard out to watch for prowlers who might be about for the purpose of stealing food; but while I slept some thieving emigrants slipped into our camp and made away with all of our principal articles of food. Upon taking an account of our larder, we found that by limiting each man to one spoonful of flour, one spoonful of meal, and half an ounce of dried beef made into gruel, to each meal, we had sufficient food left to last until we should reach the forty-five mile desert between the Sink of the Humboldt and the Carson River.

The doctor now remarked that, as there was now nothing to eat, "we could all mess together," and he regularly measured out to each man his pint cup of gruel,—and was careful that each got his share. Many times I have been asked how it happened that such a scarcity of food existed among the emigrants in 1850. The explanation is simple, and it is this:

In 1849, because of the rush to the gold mines from all the countries of the world, every train

crossing the plains took one year's supply of provisions, anticipating a scarcity in California, by reason of the enormous influx of people. In 1850, however, nearly one-half of the trains did not take enough food, thinking they could obtain it on the way, and no train took too much,—and the saying that “hungry men will steal” was just as true then as it is now.

We were now ready for the road. Alvin was lifted into the cart, Pomp was put between the shafts, and our other horse Bob was hitched behind. Pomp did not require a driver and readily followed behind one of the wagons, while, in order to save horse-flesh, I walked. Before we reached the Humboldt River our road led us through what was then known as Deception Valley, and we were now traveling nearly south along the Humboldt River and toward the desert.

After we had been three or four days on the way we made camp in a little ox-bow bend of the river, the open end of the bow, where it joined the mainland, being not more than fifty or sixty yards wide. By this time Alvin was convalescent, and the doctor said he would “make a live of it” providing “he did not *eat too much*.” Considering the condition of our commissary, Alvin was now out of all danger, for the chance or probability of his eating too much was what might be called *highly contingent*.

Just before sunset a small company came

along and asked the privilege of camping with us for the night, as we were now in the country of the Piute Indians. These lousy vagabonds were not regarded as warriors or fighters, but they were generally conceded to be the worst thieves between the Missouri and the Sacramento. Their method of stealing stock was to send a few "braves" to crawl among the herd while grazing at night and cut the hobbles, whereupon the other members of the gang would dash toward the horses, or cattle, and with unearthly yells stampede the stock and run it off into the mountains. We were, therefore, compelled to put out a guard to protect our stock, and on this particular night I was on guard duty with a young man from the other company.

We were stationed upon opposite sides of this narrow neck of land to which I have referred, near the river, and about midnight I heard my companion fire. It was so dark that as I hailed him and went towards him I could just discern the outline of his body. He told me he had shot an Indian, but that the reprobate (that was not the word he used) had got in the first shot.

"Just look at that arrow," said he.

I found that an arrow had passed through his coat collar in front, then through his over-shirt above the shoulder, and then through the coat collar at the back,—and there it hung. He

said the Indian was cutting the hobbles from the horses when he fired, and that the Indian had fallen, but had picked himself up and ran. Upon the coming of daylight we followed a trail of blood for about sixty yards and there found "our Indian," who, in the words of Mark Twain, was "the deadest man that ever lived."

CHAPTER VII

THE DESERT

THE Sink of the Humboldt, as the name implies, is a point out in the desert where the waters of the Humboldt River disappear in the sands.

From the southern extremity of the Sink, and extending for a distance of approximately thirty miles, the surface or floor of the desert was, comparatively speaking, quite level, and it was, practically speaking, as hard and smooth as a concrete pavement, caused in all probability by some chemical substance contained in the receding waters. The last fifteen miles, however, was an almost unbroken stretch of billows of sand, in which a horse's hoof would sink and be covered at every step, and at a point about five miles out in this sand, and distant about ten miles from the Carson River, was a spot then known as Destruction Flat.

Before reaching the Sink we had rested a day at a place called "The Meadows"; and as there was, of course, no horse feed between this point and the Carson River, we cut and tied into bundles some of the tall grass that grew

here luxuriantly, and carried this with us for use in crossing the desert.

We left the southern end of the Sink, and started out upon the desert at about eleven o'clock in the morning, expecting that by traveling into the night we would be able to reach the Carson River before the heat of the following day; but we here made a serious blunder, because we should have started much earlier, for we were forced to stop and rest after we had traveled about twenty-eight miles,—being yet two miles distant from the stretch of soft shifting sand. By sunup the next morning we were again on our way; but we had not traveled more than two or three miles into this soft sand when our teams began to give out and lie down.

Numerous buzzards had been sailing along behind us, watching and waiting for man or beast to fall. Three of the four horses belonging to Bemis, Redington, and the Baker boys were the first to drop. They lay down in their harness, and being unable to get up, were quickly shot, in order to end their misery. A few tin dishes were then tied upon the back of the remaining horse; whereupon each of these men put on his best clothes, and, with one pair of blankets each, they were ready to pursue their journey. Redington alone retained his pistol.

A little farther on five of the six horses be-

longing to the other outfit went the same way. The two horses belonging to Alvin and me were still alive and able to move, which was due no doubt to the fact that they had worked only on alternate days from the time we reached the Humboldt River.

We plodded slowly along until about eleven o'clock in the forenoon, at which time we reached Destruction Flat, which, as I have heretofore stated, was five miles out in the sand, and distant ten miles from the Carson River.

Destruction Flat was well named, for I here observed more misery and desolation and hopelessness than I had ever seen before, or than I have seen since.

The Flat comprised about two acres. It was practically destitute of sand, but had been tramped until it was covered with a thick layer of dust. Upon every hand there were evidences that many emigrants had stopped to rest, and their teams had lain down never to get up. There were perhaps forty or fifty canvas-covered wagons and probably one hundred head of horses and oxen, counting both dead and alive. In these wagons were trunks and clothing, mattresses, mining tools (everything but food), which had been hastily abandoned by the owners in their anxiety to reach the Carson River and water, and to leave behind them this hell hole of the desert.

Here I saw a number of ox teams of five or

six pairs each, lying down in their yokes,—some of them dead, some of them with their swollen tongues lying extended out into the dust, and moaning and groaning as pitifully as one of our own kind,—unable to avoid the almost perpendicular rays of the sun now beating upon this spot with a fury almost indescribable. The owners of these animals had not delayed their flight long enough to end the misery of the poor dumb brutes. There were loose horses and oxen wandering listlessly about, and in the first part of the day this loose stock, in an endeavor to escape the fierce heat that beat down as if coming from a furnace, would huddle together on the western side of the high-topped wagons, and there lie down; and when the sun passed its meridian height those yet alive and able to move would shift their position and pile up on the eastern sides of the wagons, and about some of the wagons the accumulation of dead horses and oxen reached as high as the tops of the wheels. In two instances I observed wagons at each end of which the accumulation of dead animals rendered it possible for oxen to climb over them, and at each end of both of these wagons an ox, in order to get the slight shade afforded by the wagon covering, had climbed up and had got the front half of his body under the canvas,—and there had died.

The stench from these dead animals was

stifling, and the groans of the dying, distressing; a myriad of buzzards hovered around, alighting now and then to pick out the eyes of the prostrate, whether dead or alive, while the terrific waves of heat, as from a furnace, drifted over the Flat.

Redington and I went among the dying animals and gave each one a bullet in the brain, as long as our bullets lasted, and then threw our pistols away. Our canteens, which we had filled at the Sink, were, of course, long since empty, and as we were entirely without food of any kind, Redington and I poked around in the dust, finding by this means a few bacon rinds, which the doctor divided among the members of our company, allowing each a piece about two inches long, which, by his orders, were sucked.

By way of diversion Redington and I then set fire to two or three of the abandoned wagons, whereupon the doctor said:

“If you can do mischief, you can go to the river for water. You are the two strongest men in the company, and there are two men here who, unless they get water, will never live to reach the Carson River. You go on ahead, and as soon as it gets cool this evening we will, if possible, start along and meet you.”

Redington was about six feet two inches tall, raw-boned and muscular, and by far the best-preserved man in our company. Therefore, fol-

lowing this suggestion of the doctor's, he and I rummaged around in one of those abandoned wagons, and there found a ten-gallon can, with a cover and a light tent pole. With these we set out for water, the doctor warning us not to speak to each other until we reached the river, as conversation would aggravate our thirst.

A few yards south of the Flat there was a roll of sand some fifteen or twenty feet high, and here Redington and I stopped to take a last look at Destruction Flat. There was our little company, lying in the shade of a wagon at the farther end of the Flat, and their woe-begone appearance, together with the surroundings that I have heretofore mentioned, made the most distressing scene man ever looked upon. After briefly contemplating this picture, Redington and I turned away in silence toward the river, our shoes at each step sinking to their tops in the sand.

At a point about four miles on our way we came upon a stake by the side of a road, with a finger-board nailed to it, pointing eastwardly, along a dim trail, and bearing the single word "Water."

Redington, following the injunction of the doctor not to converse, wrote upon his memorandum book:

"Let's take the trail."

In answer I wrote: "Let's keep the road.

If we take the trail, get lost and perish, some of our party will also die for want of water."

Whereupon Redington wrote in answer:

"The trail crosses that high ridge, and if we see no signs of water when we get there, we will strike the road one mile farther south, which will still be in sight."

We took this trail, and reaching the ridge, found below it a depression about two acres in extent and about one hundred feet below us, which was filled with water as black as ink, caused probably by some mineral substance in its composition. At the north end of this lake there was a perpendicular cliff of sand rock, and the trail zigzagged down a very steep bank. We stopped and rested here, of course knowing that if we drank any of that water we would probably remain there. As we were getting up to start again Redington shouted:

"I can see clear water!"

I patted my mouth to indicate "keep your's shut"; but he shouted:

"Never mind! Do you see that streak of white from the sand cliff running out into the lake? That is clear water sure."

We quickly made our way down the trail and here observed many footprints, both going and coming, along the narrow beach at the edge of the lake, and at the foot of this sand cliff was a stream of clear, cool water that would fill a four inch pipe. We first dipped water with the

can cover and poured it on our wrists, and it was like electricity, for we could feel it to our very toes; then we washed our hands and faces; rinsed out our mouths, and swallowed a few drops, after which we washed out the can, put about a quart of water in it, and set it out in the sun to take the chill off. From this we took a few drops at a time until we were able to drink half a teacup full, which took us about an hour. We then filled the can and ran the tent pole through the handle and started back for the Flat. Redington, being taller than I, followed behind, with the pole on his shoulder, while I went ahead with the other end in my hand, the weight we were carrying about ninety pounds; but the forty-five pounds on my end was the heaviest forty-five pounds I ever tackled. It is not to be wondered at that this load seemed heavy when it is considered that we had been sixteen days on gruel, had been famished for thirty-six hours, and were a hundred feet below the general level of the country, with not a breath of air stirring, and enveloped in a fierce desert heat. On reaching the top of the ridge we found a slight breeze blowing, and here we sat down to rest, while Redington turned a liberal drink into the can cover and proposed:

“Here’s to the boys on Destruction Flat!”

This I followed with a less copious draught and the proposal:

“Here’s to your wife and my best girl back in Wisconsin!”

We were now ready to start back for the Flat, which was only five miles through the sand, instead of ten miles as would have been the distance had we gone direct to the Carson River for water. I hasten to get away from this infernal desert and those sad memories of the past, and will now only observe that after many rests we reached the Flat about half an hour before sundown, and the surprise and joy on the faces of our little company will remain with me as long as I remain an inhabitant of this terrestrial sphere.

We were assailed with questions: “Where did you get it?” “Have you been to the river and back in this time?” To which Redington replied:

“I’ll tell you to-morrow.”

The doctor now treated the other men as we had treated ourselves at the spring, and after filling our canteens we had about one and a half gallons left for each of the horses, which saved their lives. Shortly after dark we were again ready to start on our journey. Alvin, who was not yet completely restored to health, was placed on Bob, and we soon left behind us Destruction Flat with its horrors, and were on our way to the Carson.

CHAPTER VIII

AT THE CARSON RIVER

ABOUT every mile we stopped and rested ourselves by lying flat on the sand, and the next morning, just as old Sol was "firing the tops of the eastern pines," we reached the river,—nearly forty-eight hours after we had eaten our last gruel.

We here found the little hamlet or burg of Ragtown,—so named no doubt by reason of the fact that it was built entirely of abandoned tents and wagon covers. There were traders here who sold supplies, or exchanged them for jewelry or worn-out stock that could go no farther,—stealing quite as much as they received in exchange. Supplies were charged for at the rate of one dollar a pound, and the traders allowed about one-fourth of the value on any jewelry taken in exchange.

We had an understanding that any food procured by any member of our company should be considered "joint stock," and that when we reached the mines he should be reimbursed to the extent of the value of the property exchanged; but this compact was lost sight of,

for upon reaching the mines each man went his own way, not to meet again except upon the other side of the Great Divide.

Our horse Bob was now about ready to "throw up the sponge," so we traded him for sixteen pounds of chipped beef and sea biscuits, and we then all sat down to the most enjoyable feast in all the tides of time, for we were as lank as greyhounds, as hungry as wolves, and, in addition, possessed the dilating powers of an anaconda.

There was not a spear of grass here, for the narrow strip of fertile land along the river had been tramped like a corral, so we moved on up the river about six miles, where we found an abundance of feed for our three remaining horses. Other members of our company had made some purchases, so we were now fairly well off for a few days; but the doctor put us on a regular ration, saying we must eat lightly or we would get sick, and we could not afford to have a sick man on our hands. He said that at the end of a week we would not have to ration out our food because we *would not then have any*.

Along the Carson River, and over the Sierra Nevada Mountains to Hangtown (now Placerville), there were relief stations, about every twenty miles, which were financed by charitably disposed business men in San Francisco and Sacramento. Here were kept flour and corn

meal only ; and to a man who was *entirely destitute* would be given a pint of flour and a pint of corn meal, which, it was calculated, would be sufficient to enable him to reach the next station.

Upon approaching one of these stations it was proposed that all the horses and jewelry in our party should be turned over to Alvin in fee simple. This would reduce the remaining members of our party to the "destitute condition" that was a necessary prerequisite to our each getting a pint of flour and meal. Most of the men said that they were hungry enough to steal, but not hungry enough to beg. Then Phillips said to his partner :

"John, you can have my half of our horse."

And to my brother I said :

"Al, old Pomp is yours."

These "property" transfers reduced Phillips and me to a *destitute condition*, and as we were now opposite one of the relief stations on the bank of the river, Phillips and I started for it, Phillips insisting that I should do all the talking.

Entering the tent, we noticed a pile of sacked flour and meal at the far end, and next to it was a box about three feet square which served as a counter. I inquired of the man in charge if this was a station where they gave flour and meal to those who were entirely destitute. He replied in a rough manner :

"Yes, it is, but have you no money, jewelry, or interest in the teams to barter?"

"No," I replied. "Our teams died on the desert, and our sole possessions consist of what we have on our backs and a pair of blankets each."

He reached for the empty flour sack I carried and put into it two pint cups of flour and the same quantity of meal. This I took, with thanks, and turned to leave.

"Hold on a minute," said he; and from a shelf in his box-counter he took out a book, ink, and pen, adding: "Your name and former place of residence, please."

It immediately occurred to me that his object in getting the names of those who had been assisted on this last lap of the journey was in order that they might be published in the eastern papers. Not desiring this kind of publicity, I determined to prevaricate, and replied:

"My name is John Simmons, of De Kalb County, Pennsylvania."

Turning to Phillips, the agent asked:

"Your name, sir?"

Seeing that I had wandered from the truth, Phillips concluded to do likewise, and replied:

"My name is Peter Lewis, of the same place."

But he drawled this out so long and so solemnly that I could not restrain a hearty laugh; whereupon the man threw down his pen and shouted:

“You fellows are liars!”

“Yes,” I admitted; “we lied like pickpockets about our names, but about nothing else; and as we have the flour and meal, good-by.”

And with this parting shot we retreated. A few miles farther on we camped, and here had another *banquet*.

On the following day Phillips's partner traded his horse for a supply of grub, and that night we reached what was called Mormon Station (now Carson City), at the east foot of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Here we stopped for two days in order to give our last two horses a good rest before starting over the mountains.

Mormon Station was a village of tents, and there were five or six traders here ready to exchange grub for jewelry or other property. Before leaving Beloit, Alvin had purchased a watch, for which he paid twenty dollars, and he had kept this in reserve, to dispose of when our company got down to “bed-rock” food conditions. He was now dickering with one of the traders, who finally gave him four pounds of hard-tack and two pounds of chipped beef in exchange for the timepiece. This hard-driven bargain, aside from the fact that no weapons were displayed, very much resembled plain, common, everyday robbery, and, as I thought, merited retaliation.

This trader's tent was about twenty feet long and ten feet wide, and all along the ridgepole

relishing sides of bacon were suspended. The bed of a wagon, lying upon its side with the open or top toward the front of the tent, served as a counter, and evidently at the same time as a place for the storage of provisions; for it was filled with cans of soda crackers, chipped beef, and other supplies.

Alvin and I stood together in front of this counter while the dickering was going on, and I noticed that the centerboard extending the length of this wagon bed had broken loose from its fastenings, and one end had dropped down, leaving a crack about six inches wide at that end, and tapering to a point at the other. I gave Al a nudge and pointed at this crack, and, in order to get the trader's attention away from that particular crack, I entered the tent and told him that my partners had watches and jewelry they would have to exchange before we started over the mountain, but that I first wanted to see what he had in the way of goods, so I could report to my partners and have them come up for a trade.

While in the tent I did not fail to observe that, at the far end, a side of bacon had dropped from the ridgepole and lay upon the ground.

Meantime Al had reached through this crack in the wagon bed and had appropriated as much hard-tack and chipped beef as he had received in exchange for his watch. Upon coming out of the tent, I contrived to get near Al again, and

giving him another nudge, told him I was going to our camp to get the Baker boys to come and buy something. Then I started off. Al quickly surmised that I was up to some deviltry, and while he entertained the trader I passed around the tent, reached under, and appropriated the side of bacon. During my long life this is the only theft in which I ever engaged, and while the act was doubtless legally wrong, I felt at the time that it was morally justified; nor have I repented it up to this time, for if all the grub that we purchased from him and that we stole from him was worth a dollar a pound, he did not pay too much for the watch.

Instead of following the wagon road south for several miles, and then through a long canyon up the Carson River to Hangtown, we took a bridle trail across the mountains to Georgetown, said to be fifty miles shorter. We had been informed that pack trains had made this trip in five days, but we soon learned that "racks of bones" like our horses, could not make the trip in double the time a fat California horse could.

After making a few trades with the Mormon traders at this place we had a larder that allowed one ounce of dried beef, one heaping tablespoonful of flour, and one of meal, for each member of our company three times a day for five days, calculating that we could make the journey in six or seven days at the outside; and,

too, it was possible that we might kill a deer, as Bemis had retained his rifle,—the only fire-arm we now had.

On the night of the fifth day we divided our rations so as to have half a ration on the sixth morning from Carson, and of course on that morning the last of our grub vanished.

On this day we met two packers, with a train of ten mules loaded with food of all kinds. They said they had sufficient food to take eighty men into the mines from Carson, whither they were bound, and each of these men was expected to work twenty days in the mines to pay for this assistance. They said they did not care to bother with us, as there were not enough of us; besides, we were so near through that it would not pay them to deal with us. Incidentally, they lied about the distance to the nearest trading post at the mines, saying that it was only ten miles, while it must have been twenty-five.

The doctor then suggested to them that if we were that near the mines, and they would let us have half a pound of soda crackers each, we could “make it,” and the first time they met any member of our company he would pay them two dollars a pound for it all. They seemed to hesitate, whereupon Job Strange stopped the mules, and Bemis,—who had not shaved since he left Wisconsin, whose beard now stood out nearly straight from his face, whose hair hung

down to where his coat collar should have been, and whose head as a consequence appeared to be as large as a three-gallon bucket,—stood leaning against a pine tree close to the trail, his eyes ablaze with wrath and hunger, and with “Old Betsy,” as he fondly called his rifle, resting across the hollow of his left arm, the breech in his right hand, finger on the trigger, said in a very slow and solemn voice:

“Gentlemen, you had better take the doctor’s proposition and weigh out half a pound to each of us.”

While he made no direct threat, his look and tone spoke volumes, and the crackers were speedily weighed out, whereupon each man stowed his half pound away in his pockets. Ben Baker now confessed that before reaching the desert he had stolen a little tea from the outfit for use in case of sickness, and he now proposed that we go on to the next water, which these drivers had told us about, and have tea and crackers for lunch. We did have tea for lunch, but there was not in the whole crowd a piece of cracker as large as my thumb nail, for with the aid of a little warm water from our canteens all of the crackers had been eaten as we trudged along.

After “tea,” with a cane in each hand, we plodded along far enough to know that the packers had lied about the distance to the mines. As a matter of fact, we had taken a wrong trail

at the fork, and finally came out on the middle fork of the American River, at a point about twenty-five miles north of Georgetown.

The day following our feast of crackers we came upon a clump of low chokecherry bushes, fairly well loaded with fruit. These cherries held a large stone which was surrounded by a thin, bitter pulp. The doctor warned us not to eat them, but said we might crack the stones, which contained a little nutriment. However, I did not stop at this suggestion, and it is now quite clear to me that I ate too many cherries. The trail here followed along the north side of a very steep mountain, and I began to get dizzy. I had started out in the lead, but one after the other of our company passed me, until I finally brought up in the rear, when, in stepping over a pine tree that had fallen across the trail, I stumbled and fell in the red dust; and I firmly believe that I was asleep before my head touched the ground.

I have observed that whatever absorbs one's attention in his waking hours is very apt to be present in his dreams, and as our whole company had simply talked "eat" for several weeks, it was quite natural that, as I lay here dreaming, the subject of eating should not be far away.

I was sitting down to the finest banquet ever placed before a hungry man. The tables of the rich, set with beautiful silver and sweet-scented flowers, might be more attractive to

the fastidious, but as a display of the substantial,—for “larruping good truck” in abundance,—this spread beat them all. Here were big tin pans filled with roasted chickens, a roast goose almost floating around in his rich gravy, a roast pig with an apple in his mouth, and a pudding in his belly, apple pies and pumpkin pies, and mince pies, and white cake, and yellow cake, and jelly cake and cranberry sauce, and doughnuts galore. But of this bountiful spread, it was the last dish that attracted my attention.

The table, which was about sixteen feet long and four feet wide, was surrounded by gentlemen who were all strangers to me. My place was about a foot from one end of the table, and there was a stack of these doughnuts in front of me, each one of which reached clear across the table. Each strand of these doughnuts was three inches in diameter, so that, when doubled, the doughnut was six inches through and four feet long. I broke off a great hunk from one of these and was industriously boring my way through and around it when there came a tap on my ribs (now quite close to the surface), and I woke up to behold Alvin, who inquired:

“What the —— are you lying here for?”

I told him of my banquet and that he should not have disturbed me until I had finished that doughnut.

We soon overtook the other men, who had waited for us; and a little farther on, it being now sundown, we scraped together the leaves under the spreading branches of a large oak tree, and all laid down in a row for the night.

As there was now nothing to eat, and consequently no necessity for devoting time to the fool job of cooking or washing dishes, we could put in our whole time romancing and telling stories, in an endeavor to keep up our courage.

The doctor, who was generally of a very jolly disposition, here had a heavy dose of the blues, and predicted serious trouble if we did not soon get relief from our present condition. To this observation Bemis replied:

“Nothing of the kind, Doc. We have got along fine so far, and in two days we will be in the mines, and there have a banquet which will beat Carr Abbott’s all holler.” Continuing, he said to me: “Carr, I will draw straws with you to determine whose horse shall be killed for food when we reach water.”

I agreed to this, with the proviso that if my horse must be slaughtered, Alvin, who was not yet able to travel on foot, should be permitted to ride Bemis’ horse. The doctor prepared the straws and I drew the short one. Old Pomp must die. Poor old Pomp, who had swum every stream that had to be swum since we left Wisconsin, with me on his back or hanging on his tail; who had hauled my sick brother

in a cart on alternate days down the Humboldt River and to Destruction Flat, and had carried him on his back since we first reached the Carson, must now die, that we might suck the marrow from his fleshless bones, and boil for food the hide that covered them! This gave me the blues, and that night I could not sleep.

Pomp and the other horse were staked out together, munching the twigs of a clump of lilac bushes not far from where I lay; and as the other nine men were fast asleep I determined to go out and see old Pomp and "talk" to him. But when I was within ten or fifteen yards of where he stood, he turned his head in my direction and whinnied. I could go no farther, but returned to my bed of leaves and lay down. And, although I was then twenty-two years of age, I am not ashamed to say that I wept myself to sleep.

Not having to eat, cook, or wash dishes, we were on our way the next morning as soon as it was fairly light. Our trail was now nearing the bottom of the canyon, and here Job Strange, who was in the lead, caught sight of a deer across the canyon, gazing at us apparently in great astonishment. Strange stopped and pointed in the direction of the deer, still not saying a word, while Bemis got in range of a big pine tree and, amid the breathless excitement of all, worked his way quietly down to it, quickly stepped to one side, and fired. The deer

dropped to his knees, then sprang to his feet and bounded up the steep mountain side three or four times, while the whole crowd yelled to Bemis:

“We’ll kill your horse instead of Abbott’s, if you do not get that deer!”

The wound was fatal, for the deer now turned a complete somersault and rolled down to the bottom of the canyon. And we were all so weak that it took our combined strength to get it up to the trail. We tied the deer on Bemis’ horse and at about eleven o’clock in the day, at the junction of this canyon with another one, we came upon a small stream. Here we camped until noon; and by the next day, it is needless perhaps to say, there was nothing left of that deer but the horns, the hide, and the bones. By sundown we reached a broad trail used by the packers in carrying supplies to the middle fork of the American River, from which a branch trail led down to Volcano Bar, on the river, while another branch led to Missouri Canyon, a mile and a half to the south.

CHAPTER IX

AT THE MINES

AT the junction of these trails there was a trading post conducted by a man called "Longy," and familiarly referred to as "old Longy." As he was very tall, the name "Longy" was appropriate enough; but not so the word "old," for he was not an old man; in fact, there was not then a gray hair in that country, as no one but the young and strong went to California in those days.

We were now at the mines and must part with Old Pomp, and Alvin and I had quite a discussion as to what disposition should be made of the faithful old brute. Alvin proposed to turn him out and let him pick for himself and thus spend his remaining years in ease; but I knew that some packer would take him up and put him at hard work, and I therefore advised shooting him and thereby saving him from further toil; for the idea of having him used for packing into the mines, under the lash, was quite out of the question with both of us. Al vehemently declared that he would not be a party to the murder of Old Pomp, and I declared that

I would under no circumstances pull the trigger. We, however, found a man who promised to take good care of our old companion, for whom he paid us twenty-five dollars; and with this sum we immediately purchased a pick, a shovel, and a pan.

Eight of our company started for Volcano Bar and the river, while Al and I determined to try our luck, on our own account, in Missouri Canyon. I likewise determined that by some means I was going to get something to eat, so we went to see Old Longy, only a few yards away.

His was a typical California building of the time, and consisted of pine poles set in the ground, with canvas sides and top. I told him we were going to Missouri Canyon to try our luck, and asked him if he would trust us for a few days' grub.

"Trust you?" he repeated. "Yes; of course I will trust you. One condition only will I impose,—that you work; for I know that if you work you will get the dust, and even if you should not strike it in six months, if you work, you can eat; but if you don't work you can starve."

He thereupon weighed out a good and substantial ration for a week, then gave us mining tools, together with tools with which to make a rocker, and a piece of perforated iron to use

in making the rocker. Then, after looking us over, he continued:

“Look here, young fellows; you are dirty and ragged; toes sticking out of your boots [we had had no change of clothes since leaving Destruction Flat]; go in there”—pointing to a pile of clothing—“and pick out a suit of miner’s clothes, two suits of underclothes, and two pairs of blankets each. Then take the trail to the left of the house, and in about a hundred yards you will find a spring, and just below that a big hole for bathing. Then burn those rags.”

We thought the man must be crazy, but nevertheless did as he directed,—and found we had run up a bill amounting to two hundred and twenty-five dollars.

“Old Longy” was long since gathered to his fathers, and I doubt not that in the making up of his account the Recording Angel gave him a full meed of credit for the generous assistance he then rendered to two needy boys,—assistance that, in our destitute condition, fell upon us like a benediction.

The next morning our outfit was loaded on a mule, and we followed to Missouri Canyon and stopped at the upper end of where the ground had been worked. Here, with pine boughs we built a cabin about eight feet wide and ten feet long, in which we made a floor of pine needles. After our first meal here we went downstream to observe the methods of the miners,—how

they found gold, how they saved it, and how deep it was to bedrock,—and also to learn how much ground we had a right to claim; after which we returned and measured off a hundred-foot claim and posted notices at each end, which constituted as good a title as a United States Patent, so long as the claim was worked. Alvin found a hollow tree, and, with a part of this, put in the rest of the week making an old-fashioned rocker, this being of course before sluice boxes came into use. Meantime I had dug a ditch the entire length of our claim and had turned the stream into it.

It was about four feet to bedrock but not a “color” of gold showed up, and I was both disappointed and discouraged, because the miners below us were finding gold on the bedrock and in the gravel next to it. I worked until Saturday afternoon, making an excavation about five feet wide and twenty feet long, and was still at work when a miner from downstream came along. He complimented me on the amount of ground I had removed during the week, but when I told him I had not found a speck of gold he examined my work more closely and then said:

“Don’t you see the bedrock pitches upstream? and where the bedrock pitches upstream, or is level, there is no gold, because the sand hardens and makes a smooth surface and the gold passes over it. But it stops and settles in the gravel

where it is rough. Go upstream ten or fifteen feet and dig a shaft, and if you find the same conditions as you have here, go up a little farther; and when the bedrock raises you will find gold."

I thanked him and he passed on to Old Longy's.

I now made a narrow cut in the center of my pit,—just wide enough to work in,—and just at sundown came to a raise in the bedrock, where I picked up a sliver of gold worth about twenty-five cents. This ended our first week in the mines.

Our luck had been so poor that we were afraid Longy would go back on his agreement to furnish supplies, but there was nothing to do but to go and find out. So on Sunday we went to the trading post, and I showed Longy the result of our week's work. He laughed and said:

"The agreement is good, for my packer says you have worked like a dog digging out a woodchuck." And he immediately weighed out another week's supplies.

During the following week Alvin ran the rocker and I did the digging. We were now "old miners" and were taking out the dust; and on the following Sunday we paid our entire debt to Longy, paid for two weeks' more supplies, were well supplied with clothes, blankets, and mining tools and had ten ounces of dust,—worth \$160.00,—left.

At the end of three more weeks our claim was worked out and the canyon above had all been taken up by what we called "tenderfeet," who came to us "old miners" for information. Our rocker was now rough and full of cracks, into which fine gold had worked; so we burned it, and from the ashes reclaimed three quarters of an ounce of dust.

From here we went to Volcano Bar, where we found four of our old partners of the plains,—Bennett, Casey, Baker and Bemis,—who were now in a company with a Dr. Taylor. The scurvy, which was so prevalent in all the mining country, had not attacked any man of this company, because Dr. Taylor had kept them all liberally doped with a concoction made of vinegar and sliced raw potatoes and raw onions. They desired to have Alvin and myself join their company, as they had heard glowing accounts of gold discoveries in the Mud Springs Country, about six miles from Hangtown, and they wanted some one to go there in behalf of the company and investigate the situation.

We joined them, and two days later I started on this trip of sixty miles over a rough country. I stopped at the different mines on the way and studied the earth formations and the manner of working, reaching my destination at the end of three days.

Mud Spring at that time had a population of

about two hundred, and boasted one hotel, three stores and the usual number of saloons.

The next day I started out to locate a camping place, and at length selected one at a point about a mile west of the town, near a spring of water. There was a roadside "Dive" here, at which the proprietor peddled squirrel whiskey, and at the same time stole gold dust by means of false weights; but he did not remain long, for there was a well-defined rumor that he was to be "lynched," and he quickly left the country.

I made a brush tent, bought some supplies and tools, and began prospecting the gulches in the vicinity, in many instances carrying the dirt and gravel two miles to the spring to wash and test it. At the end of about ten days I located a claim that promised to pay ten or twelve dollars a day, providing there was sufficient rainfall to run a rocker.

There was, of course, no United States Mail Service into the mines, though there were private mail routes, upon which a charge of five dollars was made for carrying a letter to Sacramento, and the same charge for bringing one back. This was a monthly service, and was carried on by means of mules. One man would select for the field of his operations a section of the mining country embracing a number of mines, and he would go to these various mines and take up the mail for Sacramento, distribut-

ing the returning mail in the same manner. The service was not altogether satisfactory, but was far better than none at all.

The main item that entered into the cost of supplies in the mines was that of freight, and, as a result, potatoes, tea, crackers, bacon, beans, flour, meal, soap, salt, sugar, and all kinds of provisions sold at exactly the same price,—one dollar a pound. Indeed, the dollar was the unit of value in everything except the purchase of drinks at the bar, which were quoted at fifty cents each.

Four dollars a day was the estimated cost of a man's keep, which was not a high estimate, when the amount of grub the ordinary miner disposes of in twenty-four hours is considered.

There was, of course, no coin whatever in the mines at that time, gold dust being the sole medium of exchange and payment. Every trading post, saloon, or other place of business had scales upon the counter into which the purchaser's dust was placed, and there was a wide difference in the values of the dust from the various diggings,—such value varying from eight to sixteen dollars an ounce. These traders became so familiar with the various qualities of dust that, upon weighing it out, they could tell with unerring accuracy whether it came from Lousy Bar, Yankee Slide, Volcano Bar, or Jackass Gulch.

It was now about time for our company to ar-

rive, so I set about building a house fourteen feet wide and sixteen feet long. From a pine thicket nearby I cut the logs, which were from twelve to fifteen inches in diameter, rolled them to the place where the house was to be built, and by means of skids got them set up. I then moved my bed into one corner and began to fill up the cracks. A scorching fever here seized me and abruptly stopped my work. I managed to reach the trail leading from Mud Springs to Hangtown, and there lay down until a mule train came by headed for Hangtown. By this means I sent word to Mud Springs for a doctor, who came in about an hour. He was a young man, and after looking at the cracks between the logs and examining the open spaces cut out for the door and windows, he looked at the blue sky overhead and remarked:

“Well, young man, if there is anything in the fresh air treatment, you ought to get along without a doctor.”

He then asked what was the matter with me, and I told him that I didn't know, and that was why I had sent for him. He then examined me and pronounced it a case of mountain fever, gave me some medicine, and then brought some cold water from the spring. He told me I should be in town, but there was no spare room, and a tent would be too hot in the daytime and too cold at night. Finally he pulled off his coat, vest, and necktie, took the ax, and went

out; and presently I heard him chopping. After a while he returned, bringing in pine twigs, with which he filled all the cracks about the corner where I lay; then he cut a number of long poles and made a lean-to over my bed, covering this shelter with pine brush, the long leaves of which he pointed downward, in order to shed any rain that might fall. After making me some corn-meal gruel and placing some water and medicine within reach, he left, saying he would return about nine o'clock the next morning.

This doctor made eleven trips in all, charging half an ounce of dust for each trip,—which was cheap enough; for he either cooked something or brought something for me from town each time he came. On the fourth day after his last visit, while I was sitting out in the sunshine, my brother Alvin came. He reported that the company had struck good diggings in a canyon near Volcano Bar, which would last until we could get back to the river bars; but after I had shown him fifteen little packages of dust that I had obtained from the same number of pans of dirt, he advocated our leaving the company and spending the winter here. However, as we would lose our river claims if we did this, we concluded to return. All of my work on this house was wasted, for none of our company ever went back to the Mud Springs country.

Alvin and I were four days making the trip, and, in my enfeebled condition, it was a tough journey. We found the members of our company all busy making a ditch to carry the water past their claims. It was about six feet to bed-rock, and there were from six to twelve inches of pay gravel on the bottom, from which it was necessary to remove a mass of bowlders from six inches to two feet in diameter. There was one rock, however, about ten feet in diameter, which was resting upon about fifteen inches of pay gravel, and Casey declared he was going to get that gravel.

As we had neither powder nor drills, we worked under the lower side of this big bowlder, and Casey finally had to lie on his side in about an inch of water in order to work under it, while we shored it up so as to keep it from settling. Casey worked with a light pick, and, as he loosened the gravel, he would poke it behind him with a short-handled shovel, while Baker raked it out with a hoe.

Very soon Casey began to use some language that was as strong as it was copious, and, upon being asked what was the matter, said that some ——— thing was on the point of his pick, and in the position he lay he could not get it off, so he threw the pick out to the others,—and the point of it was found embedded in a chunk of gold worth nearly three hundred and fifty dollars.

In the spring of 1851, when the river had fallen so that we could work there,—while work could not be carried on in the canyons, because of the lack of water,—we moved to a low bar below Volcano. There were about seventy-five men working here, and one day one of the miners, with his big hammer poised in air, stopped and yelled:

“Look, look, for God’s sake look!”

Every eye was instantly directed toward the trail, and then some one yelled:

“Three cheers for the lady!”

At the call every hat went off and every man yelled with all the lung power he possessed. A lady and a gentleman were walking along the trail. The sight of a woman in the mines at this time was extraordinary. They stopped, bowed to us, and went on their way.

CHAPTER X

JUDGE LYNCH AND YANKEE SLIDE

IN the mountain sections of California in the early days there were, of course, all kinds and conditions of men. The great majority were of good character, but there was also a liberal sprinkling of bad and desperate men; and as there were no courts accessible, the miners made and executed their own decrees, there seeming to be a general agreement that, in order to keep in restraint those who were evilly disposed, it was absolutely essential that there should be an occasional object lesson, and as there were no jails, this always took the form of hanging.

Even though the proof might not be altogether satisfactory, the example remained, and the lesson taught would be valuable to others. I have heard it said that it was not an unusual thing in those days for a miner to leave his gold dust in an exposed condition in his cabin during his absence, feeling sure that it would not be molested. I do not know, yet I am inclined to think there is more or less romance in this statement. Nevertheless, it is true that swift and certain death was the portion of one caught

stealing, and this fate befell some who were merely suspected of it.

I here digress to mention a story I once heard of some miners having lynched a man supposed to have been guilty of stealing a horse. After the "ceremonies" were over, and John was thoroughly "lynched" it was discovered that a mistake had been made and that the wrong man had been put to death. John, it seems, had left a widow, and one of the "lynching party" was sent to the widow to explain the mistake and to make such apologies as the situation permitted. He tapped gently at the open door, and, upon the widow's appearing, our apologist said:

"Mrs. ———, we took John out about an hour ago and hung him for stealing a horse, and we have just found out that we got the wrong man; so *the joke is on us.*"

I do not vouch for the truth of this story, but I think it does give a fair illustration of the value that the early California pioneers put upon the life of a man even suspected of theft.

Yankee Slide was situated on the east side of the middle fork of the American River about three miles above Volcano Bar. At some remote period this slide had come down from the mountain and filled the old river channel to a depth of three hundred feet and for a distance of a mile, making thereby a lake three hundred feet deep, the river forming a new channel on the west.

In the lapse of the centuries the river had worn its way back to within about sixty feet of the old channel and to a depth of twenty feet below it.

The discovery here was made by five New Englanders, hence the name Yankee Slide. I happened along at the time of the discovery, carrying a hundred-pound sack of chili flour on my back (for which, by the way, I had just paid one hundred dollars), and found great excitement,—miners coming from all directions and staking off claims.

It was the privilege of the discoverers of a new mining ground to fix the size of locations, which varied with the extent of the diggings and the number of applicants. At Yankee Slide it was determined that each man's claim should be limited to fifteen feet frontage on the river,—the location of course extending away from the river indefinitely.

I dropped my sack of flour and immediately stuck up notices claiming fifteen feet for each man of our company, but the discoverers cut me down to sixty feet in all. In connection with the posting of notices, it was necessary that actual work be done in order to perfect title to a claim. So I borrowed a pick and shovel and went to work, and when night came I placed my sack of flour in the hole I had dug and sat down on it. I had no supper; but why should I eat

when I had the world by the tail and a downhill pull?

I sent word to our company to be at Yankee Slide before sunrise the next morning, and they were all promptly on hand.

At the end of two days the excitement was over, and everybody was busy starting tunnels, pitching tents, or building log huts. At a depth of three feet the gravel was yielding five dollars to the bucketful.

Sandy Bar adjoined Yankee Slide, on the river just above. This bar was about sixty yards wide and about four hundred yards long, and as there was fair mining on it, a small town sprung up as if by magic, and there were stores, gambling houses, and of course saloons, which are always present where gold is plentiful.

At the end of the second week we were all running our main tunnels back across to the old channel, which proved to be about seventy feet wide, meantime throwing our loose rocks into the river, while, with our rockers at the edge, the tailings were being run into the stream.

There was one company owning the river bed, which they intended to work as soon as the river got low enough to be turned into a flume, which this company then had in course of construction, and they would of course, in order to work their claim, be compelled to remove all

of the tailings and rubbish that we were putting in.

A Doctor Woodward, rather an arbitrary man when in liquor, was the captain, or president, of this company.

In our company there were two brothers named Balch,—Arad and Confucius, the latter of whom we called “Fuche,” for short. He weighed about two hundred pounds, and when not imposed upon was as good-natured as he was big and strong. He was, however, very deaf, and, as will be seen, this drawback almost got him into trouble.

One day Dr. Woodward, evidently in liquor, was going up and down the river, calling the attention of the miners to the running of their rubbish into the river and asking them to desist. When he reached our claim, Fuche was running the rocker, the tailings from which were going into the stream, and I was handling the wheelbarrow, wheeling out material from our tunnel.

Dr. Woodward ordered Fuche to stop running the tailings into the river, but the latter, unable to hear what the doctor had said, stepped up close to him and asked:

“What did you say?”

At this the doctor shook his fist in Fuche’s face, shouting:

“Stop running the tailings into the river.”

Fuche, apparently yet unable to hear what

had been said, taking the shaking of the doctor's fist to be a threatening demonstration, immediately swung a short-handled shovel and struck Dr. Woodward on the side of the head, the blow knocking him unconscious into the river.

I reached the mouth of our tunnel in time to see the blow, and immediately dropped my wheelbarrow, and, rushing to Fuche, said:

"Pull that man out of the river, or you will be hanged within two hours."

Fuche did not hesitate, but plunged into the river. The water was about three feet deep and was moving swiftly, and Dr. Woodward was merrily sailing along on the bottom. Fuche soon reached the unconscious man and drew him out at a point where there was a rock about three feet high (evidently placed there for the occasion), upon which Fuche placed the doctor. The top of this rock had its low side toward the river, and the doctor was placed upon it so that his head was down, while his feet and legs were hooked over the upper edge to hold him in position. Fuche put his knees upon the doctor's breast and then, by alternately pressing and letting go, finally got the water all pumped out of the doctor's lungs, and likewise the whiskey out of his stomach. The doctor came around all right.

Two hours later there were about three hundred men assembled on Sandy Bar, and they

accused Fuche of attempting to drown Dr. Woodward. The usual way of trying an accused was to appoint a judge and twelve jurors, and this was now proposed. But some of the crowd said it would take too long, for, in addition to disposing of this case, it was necessary for the meeting to take up for discussion the question of dumping rubbish in the river. The spokesman of the crowd proposed to draw a small log across the bar, making a mark, and those in favor of hanging Fuche were to stand on the west side, and those opposed to his hanging were to stand on the east side.

The mark was drawn and witnesses were called. I testified that I saw Dr. Woodward shake his fist in Fuche's face and that Fuche had knocked him into the river, and had then pulled him out, placed him upon a rock head down, and had pumped the water and whiskey out of him.

Another witness testified to the same facts and the case appeared clear enough; but this crowd, some of them half drunk, did not want to leave their work to attend this meeting without hanging some one. We now "cast our ballots" by taking our places on the respective sides of the mark, and we saved Fuche by eight votes, I, of course, favoring his acquittal.

This matter disposed of, we then took up the question of depositing rubbish in the river, and the meeting determined that the rockers could

be run on the river and the tailings run into the stream; but the rocks must be disposed of in some other way. The decision was hard on both sides, yet its justice was recognized by all, for it was the only solution of the question that would permit work by all. If all the rubbish were dumped in, the river bottom would not be worth working, and if we on the Slide could not wash our gold out at the river, we would have to abandon our work until the river bottom was worked out,—which would probably take six months.

After three weeks' operations under the new method, there was a bench of rocks between the tunnels,—a mass from four feet to six feet high, and extending the whole length of the Slide. Our main tunnels were now completed and we were stoping out the gravel on each side and piling the rocks behind us.

Alvin and I leveled off the rocks between the tunnel and that of our next neighbor, covered them with pine twigs, pitched our tent, and arranged our beds. The open end of the tent was toward the bank, and lying upon my bunk, I could see into the mouth of our own tunnel as well as into that of our neighbor. There was a large oak tree between our claims, some of the branches of which spread out over our tent. The mountain side above the tunnels was very steep, and we had cut into this and leveled off a space about ten feet wide and thirty feet long,

upon which we had placed our provision tent and cooking outfit.

It was my custom after lunch to go to our tent and lie upon my bunk reading until it was time to again go to work. The tunnel of our neighbor originally belonged to three men, but they had recently sold a quarter interest to a stranger who lived at the hotel at Sandy Bar, and whom I will call John Schang (which was not his name).

It was the custom of most of the miners to bury their gold dust, while others kept it in a belt around them when not at work, and while working they would leave it upon some overhead timber in the mine.

One of these partners had a belt that held about three thousand dollars' worth of dust, and upon one occasion when going to work he placed this belt on the first bent of timbers at the mouth of the tunnel, forgot to take it with him when he went to lunch, and when he returned from lunch his belt of dust had disappeared.

On this very day during the noon hour as I lay on my bunk, I had casually turned my eyes from my reading in the direction of this tunnel, when I saw Schang entering it. From where I lay it was not more than thirty feet to the mouth of the tunnel where the dust had been left, and had I known where it was, and had I been of a disposition to take it, I could have easily done

so and hid it away among the rocks and recovered it weeks or months later.

About three o'clock in the afternoon, while I was at work in one of the stopes, I was sent for, and came out to find a mob of about two hundred miners, by whom I was immediately accused of stealing the belt of dust. Of course I denied having any knowledge of the affair, but I did remember having seen Schang go into the mine about five minutes ahead of his partners, and I felt satisfied that, if the gold had been stolen, Schang was the guilty party. I therefore accused him of it; but my accusation was laughed at.

Preparations for my hanging now went forward rapidly. Our tent was quickly torn down, a rope was thrown over a limb of the oak tree, and the noose was being prepared.

The Balches each had a rifle, and Casey, Bennett, and my brother Alvin each had a six-shooter; and while I was protesting my innocence, Fuche determined to save my life at any cost and at all hazards. The mountain side of the level space occupied by our cooking outfit had been cut down so that it presented a perpendicular wall about six feet high, and against this wall my five partners stood, with their weapons ready for action, and with their faces toward the mob. Suddenly, above the tumult of voices, Fuche shouted:

“Carr Abbott did not steal that gold, and the

man that puts a rope over his head I will drop in his tracks.”

I can understand the feelings of the shipwrecked sailor as he first gets his hand upon a life-saving plank; of the desert wanderer, famished with thirst, coming unexpectedly upon a spring of sparkling water; of the man trapped in the flames of a burning building, as he sets his foot upon the ladder that will lead him to the ground. All these situations are thrilling enough, but, as I stood there in the shadow of that oak-tree gallows, confronted by that mob of stern-visaged miners who had already convicted me without a trial, and who had even laughed at my defense,—as I stood there completely dazed, with my last hope ebbing away, this clear, ringing defiance from dear old Fuche was the sweetest sound which ever touched my ear.

Yet this threat, which everybody knew would be carried into execution, if necessary to save my life, did not end matters, nor did it even disconcert the men to whom it was addressed. Immediately came the challenge:

“Oh, you will, will you? Well, if we must hang the whole bunch of you in order to get him, we will hang all of you.”

“All right,” said Fuche. “But we can kill five or six before you reach us, and we are going to die, or save that innocent man.”

The mob could not approach my brave com-

panions but from one side, and dared not make the attempt. It was not yet sundown, and yet, as though ashamed of the scene, Old Sol had hid his face behind a lofty peak. Finally, after much wrangling, Fuche proposed that they send me and Schang into the mine with candles, and that we be kept there until one or the other produced the gold. This was finally agreed to, after much grumbling, whereupon Fuche and several others rushed up to where I was and spoke to me encouragingly, patted me on the back, and told me to keep a stiff upper lip. And while this was going on Fuche, whose life I had helped to save at Sandy Bar, slipped a six-shooter under my blue jumper. Schang's candle and mine were lighted, and we were now ready to go into the tunnel.

Schang wanted me to go ahead, but I told him that I was not familiar with the inside of the mine, and as he was, he should lead. This was at length agreed upon, and we started. I followed him into the tunnel to a point nearly across the old channel of the river and was meantime revolving in my mind what could be done to force Schang to a truthful disclosure; for I was absolutely certain he was the thief. Having determined upon a plan of action, I now said to him:

"Hold on! We have gone far enough."

He stopped and turned around, facing me, with his candle in his right hand, while I now

had mine in the left. This brought our candles within a foot of each other, but it also brought my six-shooter within six inches of Schang's nose, and I said to him:

"You stole that gold and would see an innocent man hanged for your crime. I am not going to be hanged for stealing; and if I am hanged at all it will be for blowing the top of your head off, and if you do not dig that gold up immediately and deliver it to your partners, you will not get out of this hole alive."

He stammered and replied:

"I want to speak to my partners."

"Well," came the answer, "we are here. What do you want to say?"

The partners, without the knowledge of Schang or myself, had quietly slipped off their shoes, and, without taking candles, had noiselessly followed us into the mine, in order to overhear what passed between us. Having heard what I had said to Schang, they later in the day told me that they knew immediately that Schang, and not I, had stolen the gold.

"This young fellow will kill me sure if you do not interfere."

"Is that all you have to say?" said one of the partners.

"Yes," answered Schang, "except that you know I did not take the gold, and I will be killed sure if you do not interfere."

"All right," said one of them; "but before he kills you I would like to have you dig up that gold." And with this they started back.

"Hold on," cried Schang, "I want to make a proposal. If you will keep that crowd from hanging me I will produce the gold."

Until that moment my nerves had been perfectly steady, but with this statement my whole being relaxed, and my frame shook and trembled like a poplar leaf in the breeze. I now lowered my pistol while Schang's partners told him that they would do the best they could, but that they could not promise anything. "Well," said Schang, "go back towards the front."

We went to a point about twenty-five or thirty feet from the entrance, and here Schang went into one of those low stopes about eight feet from the main tunnel, got down on his knees, rolled over a rock, and there lay the belt of gold. He threw it out to his partners, and then made a dive in among the loose rocks that had been piled back as the miners worked forward, and that, in some places, filled the space to the overhead timbers, leaving ghastly holes.

When we came out of the tunnel, and the mob was informed of what had taken place, they were the maddest lot of men I ever saw, because we had not brought Schang out.

Immediately from a box of candles at the mouth of the tunnel each man supplied himself, and into the mine they all went in quest of

Schang; but their search was in vain, for they did not succeed in finding him. It was surmised that he had stowed himself away in some dark hole where he had remained until the shadows of night made it possible for him to escape unobserved. However this may be, he was never found, and, so far as I know, was never heard of afterward.

I went to our little flat for supper, but my appetite was gone, and for weeks afterwards, as I closed my eyes in sleep, I could see that accursed rope dangling above my head.

It is not difficult to write of swimming the ice-cold streams upon the plains leading a band of horses; nor of standing half a night upon a rock, stamping my feet to keep from freezing while menaced by a pack of hungry wolves that were leaping to within two feet of the spot upon which I stood; nor of crossing the barren sands of the desert, without food or water; nor of hobbling along for six days, with a cane in each hand and without a particle of food; nor of lying for eleven days under a brush covering, consumed by a scorching fever, but tongue cannot tell, nor pen write, nor brush paint the horrors that passed through my mind during the three hours of that ever-to-be-remembered day when an unreasoning and bloodthirsty mob of miners almost took my life by violence. And I quite agree with the author of "The Cardinal's Snuff-Box" in his statement that the only

things that are worth writing are inexpressible and cannot be written.

Late in the summer of 1851 the saying, "All is quiet along Yankee Slide and Sandy Bar," became as common as "All quiet along the Potomac" was in the days of the Great Rebellion, or as "Villa is dead" is common now. So, except for the following incident, there is little to record.

A short distance above Sandy Bar there was a small bar upon which about fifty men were mining, and they obtained their gold, at a depth of from ten to twelve feet, by sinking pits five feet wide and ten feet long. In one of these pits two partners got into a quarrel, and one was killed by the other; whereupon the miners collected to investigate. The surviving partner declared that he had been attacked, and that he had fought only in self-defense and without any intention to kill; but, as it had been some time since anybody had been hanged, the miners detached the rope from the hoisting tub, adjusted one end of it about the man's neck, and pushed him off into the pit, then turned the windlass until his feet were raised from the ground, made the rope fast, and went back to their work. After supper both bodies were buried in a single grave on the mountain side.

CHAPTER XI

DIVERSIONS AND AMUSEMENTS

THERE were few of the miners who were religiously inclined, yet they nearly all rested on the Sabbath, and the time was passed in wrestling, jumping, pitching horseshoes, playing cards, gambling, drinking whiskey, and so on.

One Sunday a ventriloquist made his appearance at Sandy Bar and secured the use of a store, which had just been completed (pine poles and canvas-covered top and sides), for an evening performance. The merchant's stock of goods had just arrived, and there was a great pile of sacks, boxes, and bales piled in the back end of the building, while at the other end the ventriloquist stationed himself behind a curtain. The big room was literally packed with miners, all standing, while the pile of goods in the rear was covered with men, among whom was our old friend Doctor Woodward, sitting upon a sack of Sandwich Island potatoes.

The performance was a Punch and Judy affair, and wound up with a production of the Devil, horns and all, who looked terrifying enough. The head and shoulders of his Satanic

Majesty appeared just above the curtain, and by means of some wire attachment he was made to move his lips and chin as in talking. He made quite a speech, saying, among other things, that in this wild region where there were no infernal laws to bother, no society, no ladies, and no churches to make a great fuss about nothing, it was perfectly proper and commendable to get drunk on Sunday and have a good time. Meantime Dr. Woodward, with a few jolts under his belt, had been busy cutting open a sack of potatoes, from which he selected a large one (worth a dollar, by the way), and threw it over the heads of the crowd below him, striking the Devil squarely in the face. The Devil dropped behind the curtain and remained out of sight until the yells and swinging of hats had ceased; then he came cautiously into view above the curtain and, with a long, bony finger pointed at Dr. Woodward, solemnly said:

“Doc, Doc Woodward, I have a lien on you.”

The summer months were now nearly gone, Yankee Slide was almost worked out, and the River Company was broke, and it was a sad and a touching sight as those miners packed their blankets and struck out for other diggings,—without an ounce of dust and heavily in debt to the merchants, when they had, in fact, expected to be carrying fortunes back to the loved ones far away. But such was the fate of a large majority of the miners of those days.

A few weeks later our claim was exhausted, and in the last stope it was necessary for one man to bail out water while two men worked on their padded knees in water five or six inches deep, while from the springy ground overhead saffron-colored water dripped down their backs.

CHAPTER XII

JUST AN INCIDENT

THE face of Yankee Slide toward the river side had an angle of about forty-five degrees, while the top, which was about four hundred feet wide and nearly level, was well covered with pine and spruce trees, many of them being five and six feet in diameter; and it was here we obtained our supply of lagging for timbering the mines below. The trees were sawed into four-foot lengths and then split into boards six inches wide and one and a half inches thick, and were either carried down to the entrance to the tunnels or bound in bundles and hauled down by hand with a rope.

About one hundred feet below the mouth of our tunnel there was a bench of land about fifty feet wide and seventy-five feet long, upon which a man by the name of Holmes had put up a building, and in which he was conducting a store. It was a house typical of the time, with poles set in the ground, and top and sides covered with canvas. The structure was about thirty feet wide and fifty feet long, and there was an open space between it and this steep

hillside,—a space just wide enough for a pack train to pass along. At the north, or up-river end, of this building there was a bar built of split boards, while along the east side there was a row of tables made of the same material. The remainder of the floor space was filled with all kinds of groceries, provisions, and miners' supplies.

About three hundred yards above this store there was a mine that was being worked by three men, one of whom had been injured some time before in hauling lagging timber down this steep mountain side; and these partners made up their minds to avoid the further chance of injury, by rolling a big log down and then cutting it up at the mouth of their tunnel.

Proceeding to a point on the top of the Slide close to the edge of the fall toward the river, and about equidistant from their mine and from the store, they cut down a tree,—about thirty-six feet long and more than five feet in diameter at the larger end and tapering to about three feet at the smaller end,—and after making due allowance for this difference in diameter, they had calculated to the nicety of a gnat's heel that, by starting the log on its journey at a particular angle, it was absolutely certain that it would land just exactly at the place they wanted it at the mouth of their tunnel.

Everything was now in readiness, and the log was started on its dash for the bottom, but “the

best laid plans of mice and men gang aft agley," and while the log went all right for part of the way, it soon struck against an oak tree, which reversed the log and turned the big end upstream, and away it went, hellbent for Holmes' store.

There were fifteen or twenty men inside the store,—drinking, playing cards, or trading,—and they were now in imminent danger; but, fortunately, the cook, happening to glance up from his pots and kettles, saw the log coming and shouted to the men, who "streaked it" out of the building, the last man emerging just as the log struck the building at a point about four feet above the ground, and went through it as if it had been thistledown. The building was literally sheared off; and flour, pickles, meal, sugar, beans, soap, crackers, New Orleans molasses, vinegar, whiskey, bar fixtures, tables, and so on were strewn and scattered over the rocks all the way between the store and the river, fifty feet away.

A big crowd of men gathered, and Holmes stood apart from them, hatless and forlorn, contemplating the devastation. While he stood thus in reverie, the three miners responsible for the trouble appeared and asked him if his name was Holmes, to which he replied that that had been his name five minutes before, but that he did not know what his name was now.

They proposed to Holmes to set about at once

rebuilding the store, and as soon as the amount of damage was ascertained they would immediately pay it.

Dozens of men now went to work cleaning up the rubbish, getting posts, cutting poles, sewing canvas for covering, and gathering up the scattered merchandise, and by sundown they had a better looking building than the one that had been destroyed; for, instead of presenting to the beholder a vision of plain walls, it was now liberally sprinkled with great patches of color made by molasses, whiskey, vinegar, and canned goods.

Just here I will call attention to a book of travels that I once read called "Sights in California and Scenes by the Way,"—a book of which I believed every word, because in its last chapter I found related two incidents that were within my personal knowledge. One of these was this:

Eagle City, situated three miles up the river from Volcano, had about five hundred voters, and the wise men there set themselves to the task of electing a justice of the peace, saying that Volcano could dig gold on election day. Across the river from Volcano there were seven men working a claim, who were all relatives, and one of whom was a fool; but he could shovel as well as a wise man, and it was understood that he was to be made use of until the claim was worked out, and then was to be abandoned

to shift for himself. Volcano could not endure this snub offered it by Eagle City, and a caucus was held the night before election, and this fool was nominated for justice of the peace. Although it was a state election, the rest of the ticket was ignored as of no importance. With the votes of the miners at Volcano, aided by those of the roughs and gamblers at Eagle City, the fool was elected by a handsome majority. This ended that day's sport, but the night was one of peril.

In 1849 a dam constructed of logs, rocks and brush had been thrown across the river at the upper end of Volcano Bar. It still remained and a sheet of water about four feet deep, caused by a cloudburst, was now pouring over it. At the center of this dam stood a post,—a log,—which extended about five feet above the water, while below the dam the river was white with foam, and the waters swirled and beat against the rocks and bowlders so that no land animal could have gone over this dam and survived.

The seven men to whom I have referred had attended the election at Volcano, and at sundown started back. They had a small log boat capable of carrying two men, and, with the fool at the bow of the boat and one of the other men in the stern with the paddle, the boat was started across. Upon reaching the middle of the river it became apparent to the man in the

stern that he would be unable to reach either shore, as the boat was being carried rapidly downstream; and just as it was about to go over the dam he jumped for this post and succeeded in holding fast to it, his feet resting on the top of the dam and his head and shoulders just above the water. The boat and the "Justice" went over the dam, and neither was seen again.

The post was about seventy-five feet from either shore, and in a few moments the entire population of the town was at the river, discussing plans for a rescue. There was a big skiff used as a ferry at Eagle City, and it being known that it could not be bought nor borrowed, three of our men went up in the dark and stole it, then brought it down to where we were.

By this time it was so dark that we could not see the man clinging to the post, except by the light of a big log fire that we had built. There was a rope extended across the river above the dam, which was held up by numerous empty tin cans, and to the center of this rope we tied another rope about seventy-five feet long, and to the lower end of it was attached a block of light wood. We then untied the ends of the cross-river rope and moved it downstream until the block was within reach of the clinging man; but the roughness of the water, as it beat against the post, deflected the block to right and left, and it was some time before he was able to get hold of it. We then yelled to him not to

let loose of the post but to cling to it with all his might, and we would pull him off; because it was apparent that if he should let go and there should be the least slack in the rope, he would go over the dam.

We now pulled the rope taut, and, when he did let go of the post, he shot up the river eight or ten feet, as though hurled from a catapult. We drew him unconscious to the shore, but hot blankets, vigorous rubbing, and liberal potations of hot whiskey revived him and brought him around all right, and at three o'clock in the morning we all went to bed.

CHAPTER XIII

RIGHT PLACE—WRONG TIME

ABOUT the 20th of October our claim on Yankee Slide was completely worked out. Alvin and I intended to leave for San Francisco, on our way to Wisconsin, on the first day of November; but as there were eight others who were going to leave on the fifteenth, we concluded to go all together. I was now quite ill from my last siege underground, and needed sunshine; and as the sun did not reach down into this canyon until half-past ten in the morning and disappeared at three o'clock in the afternoon, the doctor advised me to go to Coloma, where there was plenty of sunshine, and to wait there for the remainder of our party.

I started on this trip afoot, wearing a long blouse, which covered a belt containing about twenty-five pounds of gold dust worth about five thousand dollars. I carried a six-shooter in another belt on the outside. I followed a zigzag trail up to Old Longy's, where I stopped overnight, and the next morning set out for Georgetown over a good, broad trail that had been well brushed out, in order to accommodate the

pack mule trains carrying supplies to the mines along the river and its tributaries.

When about eight miles from Georgetown my trail led through a belt of very thick brush about eight or ten feet high. Suddenly I heard a rustling in the brush on my right, and upon looking in that direction, observed the topmost twigs moving in such a way as to indicate that whatever was causing the twigs to move was headed toward the trail at a point ahead of me. I thought it was probably a coyote or wild cat, and I drew my pistol, and pointing it ahead of me along the trail, mentally remarked:

“I will break you of killing chickens.”

As I held my pistol thus pointing, out stepped a man holding a cocked pistol by his side, but, fortunately, his pistol was down and mine was up. We eyed each other for a few seconds, whereupon he said:

“Are you going to Georgetown? If so, there is plenty of room to pass.”

I replied that I was going to Georgetown, but that I did not propose to go ahead of a man who would sneak into a trail with a pistol in his hand, and I said to him:

“Drop it quick.”

He did so; and as the weapon was cocked the jar discharged it, and the bullet buried itself in the ground. I asked him if he had any more firearms about him, and he shook his head. I

then said to him that a highwayman might easily be a liar, and for him to turn around and walk slowly down the trail ahead of me; which he did.

When I reached the place where his pistol had dropped, I picked it up and threw it as far as I could into the brush. Of course I knew that if I took him into Georgetown he would be hanged within two hours,—and perhaps I ought to have driven him in, but I had never been in favor of “lynch law,” and I also now knew from experience just how a man feels when he is about to be hanged; so I simply could not do it. When we had gone about two miles and were out in the open country, I pointed to a large pine tree about fifty yards to the right and told him to go there and to stay there until I got out of sight. And this he did.

When I arrived at the hotel in Georgetown I told of this experience, and the proprietor was wild because I had not brought the highwayman into town, saying there had been several miners robbed in that same belt of brush during the summer, and he wanted me to stay over a day and he would get up a crowd and burn the brush and drive the highwayman out, so that I could identify him; but this idea was abandoned, as a fire would involve the probable destruction of several miners' cabins.

The next morning, however, a posse was sent

out. But I never learned whether the man was apprehended, as on that day I went on to Coloma, where I remained until my brother and the rest of our party came along.

CHAPTER XIV

HOMEWARD BOUND

WE traveled by stage from Coloma to Sacramento, and then by steamer to San Francisco,—the steamer trip costing an ounce of dust.

In 1849 the good ship *Niantic*, having been deserted by her crew, at high tide floated to the southwest corner of Washington and Montgomery Streets, where it lodged; and it had been fitted up and was now doing duty as the Niantic Hotel. Here we remained until ready to sail for the Isthmus.

Unable to get berths on the steamer, we were booked in the steerage at three hundred dollars each, paying for our passage in gold dust at sixteen dollars an ounce,—dust that was worth nineteen dollars at the Philadelphia mint.

The site of the Palace Hotel was then nothing but sand dunes, while west of Dupont Street there was a mass of brush. We went to an elevation from which we could see the Golden Gate, the islands in the bay, and the Oakland and Alameda shores, with the green hills beyond, upon which wild cattle then roamed. We then went aboard our ship and selected our

bunks in the steerage, but, upon examining the mattresses, beat a retreat, as we here found denizens whom we feared, if they got mad, might pull the mattresses from under us. We never went into that hole again, but slept on deck. Fortunately, too, we had taken the precaution of carrying with us a good supply of grub.

The steamer was overloaded with passengers, and the living conditions were such that I shall not even attempt to describe them.

We arrived at Panama seventeen days out from San Francisco, and anchored a mile from shore. Here the passengers were taken in the ship's boats, but they could not get nearer than about one hundred feet from the shore, and from there the passengers were carried upon the backs of the natives. We had expected to go on horseback across the Isthmus, but the travel had been so great that there was not a horse, mule, or jackass to be had; so we started on foot for Cruces on the Chagres River, from which point boats would take us to Chagres Bay, where we could board a steamer for New York.

At San Francisco I had bought a pair of patent leather shoes, thinking they would be nice to wear on board ship, and not expecting that I would have to do any walking on the Isthmus.

We started across the Isthmus on foot, and as there had been a recent heavy rainfall, which

compelled us to walk at times through mud and water, my shoes fell to pieces at a point about seven miles from Panama, and I was able to bind the soles to my feet only by tearing a pair of drawers and an undershirt into strips and tying them around.

About eight miles from Cruces we came upon a saloon, which was a building covered with bamboo poles from the eaves down to a point about two feet from the ground, leaving an open space for light and ventilation. Alvin caught sight of a pair of shoes upon the floor of this building, which could be reached from the outside through this open space, and at his suggestion I called the dozen tall black fellows sitting about to come to the bar for drinks, while Alvin quietly slipped out, reached in and stole this pair of shoes, then started down the trail. If I am to be regarded as a *particeps criminis* in this transaction, I justify it upon the ground of necessity, which knows no law, and upon the further consideration that there was no evidence that these shoes had any owner, and if they did have an owner, he evidently had two pairs of shoes, while I had none, and in that country one pair of shoes would seem to be sufficient for any man of ordinary means.

We soon overtook Alvin, and I found that, by putting on two pair of socks and stuffing in a couple of handkerchiefs, I could wear these brogans, but fearing that they might be missed

and that I would be pursued, I took the lead and ran nearly all the way to Cruces; but just before reaching there I threw them away and went in my stocking feet into town, where I bought another pair of shoes.

At this point we hired a boat and boatmen and started down the river, but it soon became so dark that we were compelled to make camp for the night. We got started on our way the next morning at sunrise, and reached Chagres about noon, where we expected to take the steamer for New York, but because of head winds and rough weather our steamer had gone to Navy Bay, now Colon. The railroad then in course of construction had reached the Chagres River at a point about ten miles above Chagres, whither we were taken in a small stern wheel steamer, and here we boarded a train made up of construction cars. As the road had not yet been ballasted we bumped along at about four miles an hour to Navy Bay, and here in the good ship *Georgia*,—a great, high, round-nosed, side-wheeled old tub,—took passage for New York.

We stopped at Havana about five hours to take on coal. A rebellion had just been suppressed, and the leader, Lopez, was to be executed that very day. I did not attend the execution, but some of our party did; and they reported the execution to have taken place as follows:

There was a great castiron box with an opening in it just large enough for a man to sit down in. The victim was put in this box, and the box was then closed and fitted closely around his neck, leaving his head outside at the top. With a machine something like a derrick they lowered a great iron clamp, which, as it reached the victim's head, opened and took in his head, whereupon the clamp was drawn upward, pulling off the head of the victim, while the blood from the broken arteries of his neck ran, like water from a garden hose, over the iron block to the ground. The execution took place in the beautiful Plaza, and was witnessed by thousands; the barbarous method of execution employed being adopted to strike terror to the soul of those that dared rebel against Spanish rule, but, as might be expected, it had just the opposite effect, and the plotting of treason still went on.

On Christmas day we reached New York, and by one o'clock that afternoon the barbers, bath houses, and clothing stores had so changed our appearance that we hardly knew one another when we met for lunch. To see a white-haired man was a curiosity to us, for there was none such in California, and here in New York we fairly gaped at them as we met them on the streets. We spent two days in seeing the sights, and then came our parting, and it was indeed hard to separate from those who had

been friends in the exciting scenes and incidents through which we had passed. We put on bold faces, however, shook hands, and started in different directions for the loved ones at home.

Alvin and I arrived at Beloit, Wisconsin, January 20, 1852, having been detained on the way two weeks, when Alvin was attacked with Panama fever.

We were now home again, and as during my absence Elizabeth had not found a fellow she thought would make a better husband than I, we were married on the 19th of the following month.

CHAPTER XV

THE SECOND TRIP ACROSS

BEFORE leaving California I had determined to get back there just as quickly as I could, so I immediately set about preparing for my second trip "the plains across."

The experience I had gained on my first trip convinced me that ox teams would be preferable to horse teams, and, as I was fitting out for the second journey, not a little fun was made of me by my friends on this account; yet I knew that, there being no railroad, the dull ox was the next fastest means of travel. The explanation of which is this:

The horse was constructed by nature as a faster animal than the ox, and his paunch is but a few inches in diameter and lays lengthwise of his body so as not to interfere with his movements, and he requires more condensed and richer food, which must be masticated before it is swallowed. Therefore, if you put him on a grass diet alone, he spends the whole night selecting the choicest and richest tufts of grass, and when sunrise comes he goes into the harness without sleep,—and no animal can live

without sleep. Of course he occasionally shuts his eyes while leaning against the collar, but the crack of the whip soon reminds him that he is the servant of the two-legged beast on the box, and the result is that within four weeks after crossing the Missouri his ribs show as plainly as black hoops on a white barrel, and then between Fort Laramie and the summit of the Rocky Mountains,—at some camp ground out of the way of the emigrant travel,—two or three weeks are lost in resting and feeding. Experience showed that about thirty per cent of the horses never reached the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

Upon the other hand, the slow ox has a bread basket that holds about a bushel; with his rough tongue, a foot long, he reaches out and sweeps in whatever comes in its way, and in two hours he has his fill, then lies down and puts in the whole night in sleep, raising a cud of food from one side of the basket, chewing and then depositing it on the other side, until the whole has been masticated. He has, moreover, slept through the entire operation, and at sunrise he is ready for the yoke, and, if not driven more than twenty miles a day, he reaches the summit of the South Pass of the Rockies fit for the shambles, and has already commenced to overtake the horse trains that crossed the Missouri at the same time.

I fitted out four teams of five yoke each, and

took along also sixteen extra oxen and fifty cows. Alvin was again a member of our company, as was also brother John, with his wife and three children. I took also twenty-one passengers, who paid one hundred and twenty-five dollars each, and who agreed to do their equal share of the work on the way over.

We left Beloit March 2, 1852, and crossed the Mississippi at Dubuque, and later crossed the Missouri at Council Bluffs. At that time Iowa was inhabited only along the streams and belts of timber, and the broad prairies were well covered with last year's growth of grass.

There was an occasional belt of wet land, from fifty to seventy-five feet wide, with tussocks and tall blade grass, which we were able to cross by lengthening our ox teams so that there would be two or three pairs of oxen on the firm ground ahead.

Our wagons were taken across the Missouri one at a time in a scow,—at five dollars a trip,—but my own men had to do all the rowing, and as the river was raging we had to start in the water about half a mile above the come-out on the other side. We got the oxen across this stream by leading two of them behind a boat, and driving the others in to follow them, two men following in a skiff to keep the loose cattle from turning back. Our crossing was made without any mishap, and we stopped for the

night at the site of the present city of Omaha. Old Sarpie was still trading there, and he informed us that the Pawnees were hostile and giving much trouble because the emigrants were slaughtering ten times as much game as they had any use for,—leaving much of it to rot, while the Pawnee women and children were starving. He said we should have at least fifty men, and that one hundred would be better, until we reached the Sioux nation, which was friendly.

We, of course, had not molested the Pawnees nor their game, but were well aware that for the violation of his laws the Indian holds responsible not only the individual but the tribe to which he may belong.

We here joined a company of sixteen men, with four wagons and fifty oxen; and now, with forty men in all, we moved westward March 19th. At the Loup we rested for a day, and here were joined by a company in charge of two men named Beam and Pugh, with forty men and five hundred head of cattle. We agreed to travel separately, but for safety were to camp together each night until we reached the Sioux nation.

I here digress to remark that when our company had reached a point about two hundred miles west of the Missouri we were overtaken by a train of horse teams, made up of five

wagons, with four horses each. Upon the side of each wagon was lettered in bold type

“SACRAMENTO OR BUST.”

As they gayly passed us by, one of the drivers asked if we had any word to send to friends in Sacramento, but having made the trip with horse teams myself, I felt quite safe of my ground in answering that we would be in Sacramento thirty days before he reached that town, and sure enough we overtook and passed this company at a point about fifty miles before we reached the desert, where they had been compelled to stop for days, in order to rest their worn-out teams.

We were now in the buffalo country, yet not a rifle was permitted to be fired by any of our company. The buffalo had all been frightened away from the river bottom by the continual firing of the emigrants, but they could be seen on the low hills to the north of the Platte bottom.

One evening two Indians came to our camp,—and after I had exchanged some sugar, corn meal, a loaf of bread, and a chunk of boiled beef for a pair of leggins, a buckskin purse, and a belt, for which I had no use,—I told them to tell their Chief that I would give him two plugs of tobacco and five pounds of sugar for a buffalo, if he would send men to help kill it. I thought

my having him send his own men a wise precaution to avoid any misunderstanding.

The next morning they arrived, and I sent two men with them. They soon came upon a big buffalo in a low swag in the plain, and as our men were not accustomed to shooting big game, they shot him in every place but the right one, and he stampeded and came on the dead run headed straight for our train. It is a matter of common knowledge that a wounded or stampeded buffalo is utterly oblivious of obstructions in his way, and as we saw him coming we plied our whips in order to get out of the way, but he struck squarely against one of the front wheels of our hind wagon, and fell dead in his tracks. It took us a day and a half to repair that wheel with wood taken from a cotton wood log,—the only material we could find,—and meantime Beam and Pugh were far ahead of us; as we were in a hostile country this boded us no good. The Big Chief of the Pawnees lived on the Missouri; but every thirty or forty miles we found a sub-chief.

On the second day after this occurrence our forward scouts came on the run, and reported that about one hundred Indians were coming to meet us on the road ahead.

CHAPTER XVI

MENACED BY THE PAWNEES

As soon as the Pawnees came in sight I noticed that the Chief was about forty feet in the lead, and the Indians were divided into the same number of groups as there were wagons in our train. I thought that I knew exactly what this meant, for when they stopped it would bring a group right opposite each one of our wagons. Brother John was driving the hind wagon, and I was sitting on the forward end of it with my feet on the tongue hounds. I signaled to the men in the rear to drive the loose stock alongside of our wagons, and for all of them to arm for defense. Each man had a rifle and a pistol, and there were three men to each wagon who took turns in driving, and these were all quickly out of their wagons and on the side of the wagons opposite the ones upon which the Indians were coming.

When the Chief reached a point opposite our wagon I was standing up on the hounds. He stopped and whirled around to throw his spear at John, but I had meantime made a jump to the ground, and stood before him with the muz-

zle of my rifle almost against his breast. His spear was poised ready to throw, for what seemed to me to be a long time, but it perhaps did not exceed fifteen seconds. Meantime, all the teams had stopped, and both sides were ready for the signal from the Chief, but it did not come; for he lowered his spear and rested the end of the shaft on the ground, then turned half around, without moving his head but keeping his eyes on the muzzle of my rifle, then broke and ran for the river, while the balance of his warriors followed.

I sent two men to ride down a low swale which here came down from the north, to watch the Indians, while another man was sent on ahead to overtake Beam and Pugh and ask them to wait until we came up. The scouts reported that the Indians had forded the Platte to an Indian village, and at least two hundred of them had gone up the river and crossed back to the north side at a belt of timber about five miles ahead of us, where they no doubt expected we would camp for the night, and they would fall upon us when most of us were asleep. The man who had been sent on ahead reported that he had gone at least ten miles and had seen no sign of Beam or Pugh, so we concluded to go into camp at once. We placed the wagons in a circle and lashed the tongue of each wagon to the inside hind wheel of the one ahead. We then dug rifle pits around this corral of wagons and piled

up a sod fence, to prevent spears and arrows striking the women or children.

Our camp was in a belt of resin weed, and the old last year's stocks were from four to five feet high and quite thick. We made no fire to guide the Indians to our camp, but suppered on hard-tack, cold buffalo meat, and Platte River water. Our firearms were now examined, cleaned and loaded, and at sundown the stock was all put in the corral and tied to the wagons and to the big ropes, about sixty feet long, which we had stretched across the corral and made fast to the tops of the wheels, after which each man took his rifle pit, laid his revolver on the top of the sod fence, and we were ready for the night's vigil.

We had with us four dogs, one of them a large Newfoundland. He was led around on the outside of the corral two or three times, the other dogs following, and the rope was then taken off and they were told to watch. These dogs seemed to understand the situation as well as we did, and I do not believe they lay down or stopped walking around that camp until they were all dead the next morning.

A few minutes before the first streak of daylight showed, they all set up a terrific howling, and would run off into the tall weeds, growling and snarling, then run back to camp, apparently to learn if we too were on the watch. Occasionally there would be a mournful yelp, as

a dog received a deadly thrust from a spear, and within five minutes they were all killed.

Then followed a profound and oppressive silence, then the breaking of the dried resin weed as some moccasined foot pressed it. A little more light, and we could see over this resin-weed thicket an Indian head appear here and there for an instant, then disappear, only to come in view again,—still nearer.

In a few moments the leaders were within twenty-five yards of our camp, waiting for the war whoop of their Chief, while we were watching for the same signal. But the whoop did not come, for the sight of those forty rifles and the pistols lying on the breast-work evidently made those savages realize that an attack meant the loss of half their men.

A peculiar yell was now given by their Chief, and the Indians beat a hasty retreat, going straight over the resin weeds. Some of our men wanted to shoot them as they retreated, but, as this would only have increased our danger of attack later on by larger numbers, not a shot was fired.

We immediately broke camp and were soon on our way, keeping a scout one mile in front and another one mile to the rear to watch the Indians. I sent another man ahead to overtake Beam and Pugh, which he did near the west line of the Pawnee Nation, and they immediately went into camp to wait for us, who, by

continuous driving, reached them at eight o'clock in the evening, having made a forty-five mile journey in approximately fifteen hours. Incidentally, it was forty hours since we had cooked a meal. They kindly took our stock to the river and guarded them all night, and soon had ready for us barbecued buffalo steak, big cans of hot coffee, and Dutch ovens full of hot biscuits.

Beam and Pugh started early the next morning while we did not leave until after lunch. We went about five miles, which took us out of the Pawnee country, and here we remained for that day and the following day, to rest our stock.

CHAPTER XVII

AT SACRAMENTO—FLOOD AND FIRE

BEAM and Pugh passed us, and we passed them, several times before reaching California, and the last time I saw them was at a point about three miles east of the summit of the Sierra Nevadas. I shall never forget their kindness in delaying their own journey in order to protect our company from a hostile tribe of Indians.

There is little worth recording from here until we reached the meadows on the Humboldt River, which were about twenty-five miles above the Sink. Here my wife, brother John, and two other men were sick with fever, and thirteen of my passengers deserted me, taking their blankets and leaving during the night. At this point I abandoned the wagon with the cottonwood wheel, and put six pair of oxen to each of the three remaining wagons, in one of which we carried twelve tin cans, with which I proposed to carry water on the desert. They had been filled with supplies of various kinds, but were now empty. Two of these cans would reach across the wagon bed. We filled them

with water and started for the Sink, which we reached the next day.

Before daylight the next morning we were well out on the desert, and before sundown reached the edge of the fifteen miles of soft sand. Here we watered the stock and rested for a few hours, and at eleven o'clock at night started over the fifteen mile strip. There was a slight breeze blowing from the south, and when we got within ten miles of the Carson, the stock all smelled the water, and the teams walked as fast as they could and without being urged, while the loose stock passed the wagons on their way to water, which we reached at about half-past three in the morning. We crossed the mountains without mishap, and camped temporarily where a tributary of the Sacramento River reaches the plain.

Uncle Ira went to the mines, brother Alvin into the hotel business, while John and I leased a ranch on the west side of the Sacramento River, about two miles below the city.

Our house stood on posts three feet high, and this looked suspicious to me, but as we knew nothing about floods we thought no more of it. I bought two sows at fifty dollars each, and twelve chickens at four dollars each, and went to farming.

Our crops were getting along nicely, and then it began to rain; and it kept on raining for a month. The river was rising rapidly, and

our neighbors were collecting their stock and taking it across the river to Sacramento and then to the foothills of the Sierra Nevadas. We got our stock,—consisting of eighty head of cattle and horses,—gathered, intending to take them across the river the next day; but about two o'clock in the morning we heard water running under the house, and upon investigation found that it was up to the sills and sweeping off toward the big tule swamp to the west. Very soon all of our stock, including cattle, horses, hogs and chickens, had been swept into that tule lake and drowned, with the single exception of one horse that had climbed on top of the woodpile.

The course of the river banks was marked only by a belt of oaks that stood up in the vast waste of water. We had wood enough in the house to last two days, and knowing that the supply would be exhausted before we would likely be rescued, we waded in water up to our necks to a clump of small oaks about fifty yards from the house, and against which the hen house had lodged, and we chopped this up and floated the pieces to the house, piling them on the porch. The posts at each end of the house stood the flood all right, but those in the center gave way, whereupon the floor settled in the center and parted, and water to the depth of a foot rushed in, although the floor was dry at each end.

We existed under these difficulties for eight days, and on the fourth day, to add to the gayety of our situation, a young lady called upon us. She should have been ashamed of the way she was dressed, and probably she was; for she was as red as a Pajaro apple, and weighed nine and three-quarter pounds.

Phillips, a French fisherman, to whom we had given the privilege of pitching his tent and stretching his net on the river bank, hearing an unusual squall from the house, asked John:

“For God’s sake what is that?”

“That is a sea nymph that Carr’s wife caught during the flood,” answered John. “It came up through that hole in the floor.”

And our young lady visitor was called “Nymph,” until she went to school.

After the flood waters had receded, we hired two men to chop wood, which we sold in Sacramento at twenty-five dollars a cord. John made two boats, one of which would carry a cord and a half,—which was used to take the wood to Sacramento,—while the other would carry about half a cord, and was used for delivering the wood to purchasers. The water had been from three to five feet deep in the streets, but was now drained off and the soft mud was from three inches to two feet deep. For motive power I had a pair of oxen, and walked in my long gum boots when the mud was shallow, and rode in the boat when the mud was

too deep. Later on we hauled wood with a horse team, and were engaged in this work when the great fire broke out in Sacramento. I assisted in moving merchandise threatened by this fire, and for this I was paid ten dollars a load.

On reaching the southwest corner of the plaza with a load of cooking stoves, I noticed a big barrel in the street, with the head knocked in. It apparently contained some kind of liquor, for a lot of men were standing around drinking from long beer glasses, and considering the size of these glasses I concluded the liquor must be light wine of some kind, and I asked for a drink, and some one passed up a big glass full. After I had drank about half of it I mistrusted that it was something stronger, and I asked the men what it was.

“Brandy, you chump!” they replied.

I had never tasted brandy before, and I became very much intoxicated, for the first and only time in my life. I had heard that vinegar would check the effect of strong drink, so I quickly bought a bottle of pickles, drank the vinegar and ate the pickles; but all to no purpose, for I was thoroughly soused, and I remember that I unloaded these stoves as if they had been cord wood, for I was now feeling rich and cared nothing for expense.

Then a Hebrew tobacconist piled his goods on my wagon, and his wife, with a large mirror,

got on the seat beside me. I demanded my ten dollars, but he replied:

“I pay no bills to-day.”

I stopped my team and began to unload his loose boxes of cigars among the crowd, to which they helped themselves, whereupon my ten dollars was paid. This load was to be delivered north of J Street among a lot of gigantic sycamores, and in passing under one of them, a branch shoved its way clear through the big mirror, and my lady passenger immediately accused me of being as drunk as a fool, which I presume was approximately true.

By the time I got back, the fire was in full swing, the Court House was in flames, and Sacramento was soon in ashes.

During the following fall,—John having gone to Nevada City,—I took off the crop, and with a span of horses and a wagon, my wife and the sea nymph, and with one cow tied behind, and five hundred dollars in my pocket, I went to Nevada City and engaged in the milk business, purchasing ten cows, for which I paid forty dollars a head.

Soon thereafter a destructive fire swept Nevada City, and as all my best customers had been burned out, and it would be months before it would be normal there again, I determined to move to Marin County.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE WRECK OF THE SEA NYMPH AND LONG ISLAND

I LOCATED at Point Reyes in Marin County, probably the best dairy county in the state. This was in 1858. This whole country, from Point Reyes to Point Tomales, was stocked with Spanish cattle, many of them very wild, and the grizzly and cinnamon bears were very plentiful, doing great damage to the stock. I here engaged in dairying,—shipping produce to San Francisco.

While living at this place I witnessed the wreck of the *Sea Nymph* about two miles north of Point Reyes. During the night we were awakened by the shooting of a cannon, and upon going to the beach, found this ship stranded. Soon there were about thirty men gathered on the beach, and by means of a kite a small rope was sent to shore, and to this was attached a hawser, which was made fast on the shore and then drawn taut with a capstan. In this way all those aboard ship, except one man, were saved.

On the day before Christmas, 1862, I loaded eight boxes of butter and seventy head of hogs

aboard the schooner *Long Island*, which plied between Tomales Bay and San Francisco. Captain Sid Nelson asked me to make the trip with him, to take charge of the hogs and the unloading of them when they reached San Francisco; and he urged me to hurry home and change my clothes as quickly as I could, because he had to get out of Tomales Bay on the turn of the tide,—now almost due. He informed me also that he was to be married that night at ten o'clock. I hurried home and changed my clothes, but my wife had a presentiment of danger, caused by the white caps that were then breaking as far as the eye could reach, and she begged me not to go on the schooner, but to go on horseback by way of San Rafael. To please her I agreed, and more than once on that night's trip, when it was so dark I could not even see my horse's head, I mentally remarked that if it had not been for my wife's unreasonable fright of a few white caps I would now be in the little cabin on the *Long Island* fast asleep.

I reached San Rafael at midnight, and in the morning crossed the bay, and on reaching San Francisco went to the wharf where Nelson was to discharge cargo; but he was not there.

We could see great billows rolling in and breaking on the bar at the Golden Gate, and I noticed an elderly gentleman and a young lady walking back and forth on the wharf, gazing anxiously out at these great billows, and from

the apparent anxiety shown by this young lady I concluded that she must be the Captain's fiancée, so I asked if they were looking for the *Long Island*. The young lady replied:

"Yes. Do you know anything about that vessel?"

I answered that I had put freight on board of the *Long Island* yesterday in Tomales Bay. She then inquired whether I thought Nelson could have got out of that bay against the head wind of yesterday. I told her that I thought he got out all right; whereupon she turned white as a sheet, and seeing that I had frightened her, I made haste to explain (I did not then think the vessel was lost), telling her not to be alarmed about Captain Nelson, that he was a good sailor and a careful man, that I had made several trips with him from Tomales to San Francisco, and that when he came in sight of the breakers he would probably run back under Point Reyes to shelter, coming in when the bar should be smooth again. She replied:

"I know Nelson better than you. He had an appointment at our house last night with a lot of friends, and if he got out of Tomales yesterday, he is lost."

The old gentleman, noticing the girl's agitation, gently slipped his arm around her, saying:

"Come, let's go home."

It was now near noon, and when I went to

the Russ House for lunch I learned that the *Long Island* had gone to the bottom, taking with her Captain Nelson, two passengers, and three sailors, and that her freight was scattered from the North Head to Sausalito.

CHAPTER XIX

SALINAS VALLEY—A BULL AND BEAR FIGHT

IN 1865 I moved to the Salinas Valley, in Monterey County, and here I leased from David Spence two leagues of land (eight thousand eight hundred and eighty acres) for a term of five years, at the annual rental of five hundred dollars, with the privilege of purchasing the west half of this ranch for the sum of fifteen thousand dollars; and here for some years I engaged in the dairying business, milking fifteen hundred cows.

That part of the Salinas Valley west of Salinas was then covered with great tall mustard, while in the easterly direction it was a good grazing country. There was then a small stage station consisting of a cabin and barn at the present site of Salinas.

I had lumber hauled from Watsonville, and built a residence and out-buildings at the present site of the Spreckels Sugar Company's big factory. In those years there were only two other buildings between my residence and the Oak Grove House below Soledad,—one of which was at the Deep Well stage station, and the

other, a cabin occupied by David Spence on the river road.

R. T. Buell was then occupying the Buena Vista Rancho, across the Salinas River, and the mountain country there was infested with bears that proved very destructive to our stock, and some of our vaqueros proposed to stage an old-fashioned bull and bear fight. They built a six-by-eight-foot pen, the floor and all made of logs about one foot in diameter, with a heavy plank sliding door held up by a figure 4, having a spindle five feet long extending into the trap. In this pen they tied a young calf,—which set up a lively bawling for its mother,—and one of the largest cinnamon bears I have ever seen walked into the pen, the door closed behind him, and he was a prisoner. He was transferred to an iron cage and taken to the Davis place at the Hilltown crossing of the Salinas River, where cage and all were placed in a big corral.

A wild bull was now put into the corral, and notices stuck up in Castroville, Monterey, Watsonville, and around the country, announcing that there would be an old-fashioned bull and bear fight the following Sunday at twelve o'clock at the Davis place; and hundreds of people came.

The bull's horns had been filed until they were very sharp; and when everything was in readi-

ness the vaqueros lassoed and threw the bull and tied to one of his front feet the end of a chain about seventy-five feet long, after which the bear was let out of his cage, lassoed, and thrown, and the other end of the chain tied to one of his front feet. This was to prevent either from running away from the other, and to insure a fight. But for this chain both animals were now loose in the big corral. Nor was there a lack of music, for a white-haired Mexican from Castroville,—sitting astride of a pinto pony as old as its rider,—had brought with him a cracked fiddle, and he started a lively tune, making that old fiddle fairly squeal.

The betting was two to one in favor of the bear when the fight started. There was a barn with a hay loft in it on one side of the corral, which was open from the eaves to a point about six feet from the ground, and this was full of hay and constituted the reserved section, which was occupied by the women and children, who laughed and cheered when the bull was getting the best of it, and who would cry when the bear was having the advantage.

There were salvos of "Bravo Toro!" when the bull had the best of it, and "Bravo Oso!" when Bruin had things his way; and the fight certainly was fierce enough. Finally, when the bear, standing on his hind legs, got his "arms" around the bull's neck, and a vicious hold with

his teeth, the bull, by a mighty effort, got one of his pointed horns between the bear's ribs, and tossed him three or four feet into the air, which finished the fight; for the bear had been gored in a vital spot, and died in a short time.

CHAPTER XX

EARLY SALINAS VALLEY POLITICS

I COMPLETED the purchase of the 4,440 acre tract from Spence (now worth four hundred dollars per acre), and subsequently bought 12,000 acres of the San Lorenzo Rancho, in the southern end of the Salinas Valley; and for some years prosperity smiled upon all my undertakings.

In 1872 I was honored by being made one of California's delegates to the National Republican Convention that nominated President Grant for his second term.

In 1875 I was elected a member of the California Assembly, and was reëlected in 1877.

San Antonio precinct was in the southern part of the county, and its voting population was made up largely of native Californians, and it was overwhelmingly Democratic, and as I did not speak their language I employed Jacob R. Leese, a member of the well-known pioneer family of that name, to go with me to that precinct. A Mexican, whom I shall call Carranza (that was not his name), was the Democratic oracle and leader of the San Antonio precinct,

and I did not intend to waste any time in soliciting Carranza's support, for I thought it useless to do so; but as we were passing his residence, Leese insisted that we should at least call and shake hands with him. This we did, and while Carranza was affable enough, I saw no prospects of enlisting his aid in my fight. Leese, however, engaged Carranza in a private conversation in Spanish, and when we were about to leave, Carranza extended his hand to me and wished me good luck. I could not understand why he should wish me good luck, and when we got out on the road I said to Leese:

"You don't mean to say that Carranza intends to support me at the election."

"Yes," replied Leese; "that's just what he is going to do."

"Jake," said I, "you have compromised me in some way, in order to obtain Carranza's support, and I do not want you to agree that I shall do anything that can not be done, or that is not proper for me to do."

Leese replied that if I was elected I would find out, and if not, I would never know; but said that there was nothing wrong about it.

There was no telegraphic communication with the San Antonio precinct, and the returns from there were the last to be received, but they showed that Carranza had turned things upside down; and I was elected by a majority of six votes.

When I first met Leese after my election I asked him what he had promised Carranza that I would do if elected, and Leese replied that Carranza had a son in State's Prison for horse stealing, and that I was to get him out. I investigated the facts of the case and became convinced that the stealing of the horse, for which young Carranza had been sent to jail, was more of a boyish frolic or escapade than it was really criminal in design. C. P. Berry was chosen Speaker, and as I had been his opponent and we were friendly, I induced him to appoint me a member of the Committee on State Prisons, and this committee, after a full investigation, recommended to the Governor that young Carranza be pardoned, which recommendation was approved by the Governor, and young Carranza was liberated.

I am not altogether satisfied whether my connection with this transaction may be said to have been altogether commendable, but I do not think it was "facinorous," and with this I dismiss it from further consideration.

In 1876, which was, of course, a few years after the close of the Civil War, politics were considerably "warmer" than they are in these days of non-partisanship, and when the Electoral Commission decided that Hayes had been chosen over Tilden, the storm broke out, and Salinas, not to be behind in the procession, staged the following tragedy.

There was a very portly gentleman living at Salinas at that time, whom I shall call Quirk (which was not his name). He was a Pennsylvania Democrat (asserted by some narrow Republicans to be a very bad specimen of Democrat), and he waxed very angry over the decision of the Electoral Commission, and loudly proclaimed that under no circumstances would Hayes remain seated in the Presidential chair, and that he, Quirk, proposed to prevent it by force of arms. He thereupon undertook to organize a regiment to go back to Washington and remove Hayes and seat Tilden.

Of course, the organization of this armed force and the carrying out of this venture required the consumption of a reasonable quantity of stimulant, and Quirk started down Main Street and entered one barroom after another, proclaiming his purpose and soliciting enlistments. At each place he stopped, one or more sympathizers would join the colors, and by the time Quirk had reached the Abbott House he had "sharked up a list of landless resolute" to the number of thirty or forty, who came noisily trooping at his heels.

In the lobby of the Abbott House near the stove sat Press Woodside, a lawyer and a Southern Democrat, and Quirk now addressed himself to this expected recruit to his force. After listening patiently to Quirk's vivid account of the wrongs that were being heaped

upon the grand old Democratic party by the "thieving Black Republicans," and after being fully advised of Quirk's proposed warlike advance upon Washington, Woodside replied as follows:

"Quirk, you certainly will not question my fealty to the Democratic party nor believe that I would falter in my support of its time-honored principles. I fully agree with you that Tilden was elected, and that we have been ignominiously robbed of the presidency, yet at my years I feel little disposed to again take up arms against the constituted authorities. As you are aware, I saw several years' service in the late war, fighting for Dixie, and it was by the merest chance that my bones are not now bleaching on the banks of the Chickahominy. In that great contest I saw amputated legs and arms piled up like cord wood, and I saw numberless men shot so full of holes that they 'would not hold their "vittles." ' I wish you all success in your venture, and fortified by your virility and energy, there can be no such thing as failure; but so far as I am personally concerned, I desire to say to you that I have given this entire matter the most respectful and prayerful consideration and reflection, and am now convinced to my own satisfaction that, whatever political party is successful, the country will last as long as I will, and after that it can 'gotohell.' "

CHAPTER XXI

BUSINESS VENTURES

No one is very much interested in a hard-luck story, and I hastily pass over the following:

In those halcyon days of yore it was pretty generally conceded that our great transportation company had not been incorporated for charitable purposes, and the farmers of the Salinas Valley complained very loudly of the freight rates charged upon their shipments, and in response to what appeared to be a very strong public sentiment I fathered, or promoted, the organization of the Monterey and Salinas Valley Railroad Company, which built a narrow-gauge railroad from Salinas to Monterey, a distance of twenty miles. This enabled the farmers to ship their grain to tide water, and resulted in a great saving in freight.

For a short time this little railroad prospered, and then our big competitor, in order to recover its lost business, made a horizontal reduction in its freight charges, whereupon many of the farmers of the Salinas Valley immediately withdrew their patronage from the

little railroad and went back to their ancient enemy.

In order completely and fully to equip this little railroad, we had to go in debt to the extent of about \$120,000.00, and this withdrawal of patronage made it inevitable that there would ultimately be foreclosure proceedings.

I pledged my own credit, and thereby succeeded in keeping this railroad in operation for about two years, saving to the shippers of the Salinas Valley a very considerable amount of money.

In 1874 I had built the Abbott House, still a popular hostelry at Salinas, and in 1876-7 California experienced the dryest season since the American occupation, the rainfall in the Salinas Valley being less than five inches.

In 1877-8 there were prospects of an enormous yield, and in the month of April, when I returned from the Legislature, I had 6,000 acres of wheat standing level with the tops of the fences; but during one night in June, when the wheat was in the milk, an unseasonable rain fell, followed by a bright sunshine the next day, which brought on rust; and my entire 6,000 acres of wheat did not yield a single sack of grain.

“Misfortunes come not single spies, but in battalions,” and it now developed that a commission house in San Francisco, to which I had

been shipping my produce, had appropriated about \$45,000.00 of my money.

The dry year, followed by the rusty year, necessarily caused a shrinkage in the value of real property, and creditors, becoming alarmed for the safety of their investments, very generally either demanded additional securities, or pressed collection of their claims. I was caught in the general cataclysm, and although I had property that in ordinary times was worth a great deal more than I owed, it was now sacrificed because of the shrinkage in values, and I was broke, yet undismayed.

I think I may here with propriety mention two incidents in connection with the Monterey and Salinas Valley Railroad Company, of which I was President.

Wishing to avoid the importunities of people who I knew would be clamoring for free transportation, I procured the board of directors to pass a resolution forbidding the President issuing such transportation.

While this resolution was in force, a Rev. Mr. McGowan, an Episcopal clergyman then residing at Salinas, supported by a large delegation of the women of the congregation, solicited from me a pass from Salinas to Monterey and return, and while I was desirous of advancing religious affairs, at least to the small extent that would be accomplished by the issuance of free transportation to this gentleman, I was at

a loss for a method of getting around the resolution above referred to.

It occurred to me that if the Rev. Mr. McGowan could by some means be classed as an employee of the company, the way would be open for my complying with his request, and after a little reflection it occurred to me that above all things else our little railroad needed a chaplain, whereupon I had the secretary enter upon his books an order appointing the Rev. Mr. McGowan as chaplain of the Monterey and Salinas Valley Railroad Company, and I then handed him his pass.

I here mention the dirtiest political trick with which I was ever connected. There was to be a Democratic rally at the old town of Monterey, which was to be addressed by some celebrity from San Francisco, and the chairman of the Democratic Central Committee came to me and asked me what the lowest rate would be for running an excursion on the night of this meeting. I told him that it was not a question of rates, that I was going to run a free train on that night.

I then telegraphed to the Republican State Central Committee to send the best speaker they had to Salinas for the same night the meeting was to be held in Monterey, and I then set some men at work putting temporary sides on a train of forty flat cars, and placed benches to seat the passengers. On the day the speak-

ing was to take place I had notices posted announcing a free excursion from Monterey to Salinas; and practically the entire population of Monterey came over to our Republican meeting at Salinas, while the Democratic orator and a few of his friends, who refused to desert him, remained at the old capital.

Conditions at that time were not what they are now, and then pretty nearly anything, except scuttling a ship or cutting a throat, was considered perfectly proper in matters political; yet, at the same time, as I look back upon this incident, I do not think it very creditable, and make this confession to show that I am repentant.

CHAPTER XXII

IN ARIZONA

IN the latter part of 1879 I moved to Arizona, in an effort to recoup my fortune. I located at Tombstone, and engaged in the milk business, with fair success; and I mention the following circumstance merely to illustrate the ingenuity of the paleface in his pursuit of the nimble shilling.

I was supplying six cans of milk a day to one big hotel, and three cans a day to another; but the same amount was being furnished by a competitor. The landlord of one of these hotels complained of my milk's souring. He was about to stop the supply, but I induced him not to do so until I had an opportunity to find out what caused my milk to sour,—I agreeing to continue furnishing the milk free of charge until the difficulty should be located. I hired a man to act as a detective, and he quickly caught the second cook squeezing a pickle into the cans of milk I had delivered at the hotel. My competitor had paid the second cook ten dollars for this service. The landlord immediately discharged this cook and also stopped the sup-

ply from my competitor, giving all the business to me, which was not so bad after all.

Geronimo, the Apache chief, was now again on a raid. He was on the Mexican side in the Sierra Madre Mountains, with about three hundred warriors, and was occasionally sending parties of from twenty to thirty of his men back to the reservation to get supplies that his friends would collect, and to steal stock and commit murder and torture the palefaces on the way. I could mention many of his outrages, but will refer to but one.

His men had made a raid into New Mexico just east of the Arizona line, and three vaqueros riding the range, looking after stock, came in sight of a house at the edge of the timber. There was no smoke from the chimney, and there was no person in sight, but as they saw a number of cattle at the water troughs, they concluded that the troughs were probably empty, for otherwise the cattle would not gather there at that time of day, so they rode up to investigate. They found several children lying dead around a wagon. Their heads had been smashed against the hubs of the wheels. Upon entering the house, they found the father and mother dead, and as one of the party happened to be acquainted with the family, he exclaimed:

“For God’s sake, where is Maud [a girl of nineteen]? I wonder if they took her with them.”

The house was thoroughly searched, and then the back yard, and here they found Maud, still alive but unconscious, her feet and hands tied, hanging to a meat hook that had been driven into a tree, and the point thrust through the back of her neck. She was quickly taken down, and one of the vaqueros started for a doctor twenty-five miles away, while the other two did what they could to revive her. But she was dead when the doctor arrived.

CHAPTER XXIII

AN AWFUL JOURNEY, AND A FOOL BARGAIN

THE Government had advertised for bids to furnish beef cattle (about 4,000 head, more or less), to supply the San Carlos Indian Reservation for the ensuing year. Two other men and I prepared a bid, but when our papers were ready we ascertained that it was too late to get them to San Carlos by mail in time for the opening of bids, and the only alternative was to carry our bid there on horseback. In order to do this it would be necessary to go through the Dragoon Mountains and the Pass north of the Graham Mountains, where, ten days before, a Government pack train had been robbed and six men killed. My partners said they would not make the trip for "all the d—— cattle in Arizona," so I determined to go myself.

I was well on my way before daylight the next morning, expecting to reach Fort Thomas on the Gila, seventy-five miles away, that night, and thought that by starting at three o'clock the next morning I would be able to reach San Carlos by noon, at which time the bids were to be opened. I traveled along the west foot of

the Dragoons, and around the north end into the Sulphur Spring Valley, taking care whenever I sighted a clump of brush on the line of my trail to give it a wide berth, but I was now in an open plain where I could see for miles in all directions. The Sulphur Spring Valley is about one hundred miles long and about twenty-five miles wide, the south end of it being in Mexico, and the north end, where I was traveling, being completely surrounded by mountains.

On reaching a point about five miles from the end of the valley where the road turns abruptly east to the Pass heretofore mentioned, I met a stockman who lived in the northwestern part of the valley, who informed me that, by going through a certain box canyon I would save at least twelve miles' distance. Carr Abbott fashion, I took this short route. At the start the canyon was about sixty yards wide with high bluffs on each side, and a mile farther was from sixteen feet to sixty yards wide with perpendicular walls from 2,000 to 3,000 feet high. There was a small stream of water through this canyon three to four inches deep as it passed over the sand bars, but there were many deep pools where the water covered my saddle. The trail in many places was indistinct and overgrown with briars and berries, and my progress was very slow.

Night overtook me, and in looking up I could see only the stars, while, looking downward,

I could not even see my horse. I rode into one of these deep pools where the water covered the saddle, and with a stick that I had cut for that purpose, was able to make my way to a point where the water was but two feet deep, by means of keeping one end of this stick on the bank.

I was finally able to crawl off onto a low bank, and after several trials got my horse up also. Here was a comparatively level patch of sediment land, about forty feet wide and one hundred feet long, overgrown with blackberry bushes. After some difficulty I succeeded in collecting a lot of dry sycamore limbs and got a fire started. My horse was looking at me with wonder in his eyes. I removed the saddle and spread the blanket over him, and told him to help himself to blackberries, as it was all either of us would have for supper. Then I took off my clothes and hung them before the fire. The owls that were nesting on little shelves of the overhanging rocks above me were shouting "Who, who?"

"Who, who!" I replied. "If you knew half as much as an owl is supposed to know, you would know that there was not a man in Arizona except Carr Abbott who would be fool enough to be caught in such a hole as this."

Nevertheless they were not satisfied with this answer and kept putting the question all through the long night. When my clothes got

dry I dressed, and sat down and leaned against a sycamore stump. Having nothing else to do, I tried to figure out how long it must have been since Sulphur Spring Valley was a lake, and its outlet a big river wending its way to the sea, 3,000 feet above my head; but I became so confused in the mass of figures as they multiplied that I fell asleep, and when I awoke the stars had gone and "Old Sol" was shining on the top of the cliff.

I started on my journey, and in about a mile came to the open country, a fertile little valley about two miles wide and about three miles long, at least one-half of which was covered with blackberry bushes, clumps of sycamore and willow, the open glades well grassed. I was riding across one of these grassy spots, and my trail turned abruptly to the left into a belt of tall blackberry bushes, and there not more than thirty yards distant I saw seven black heads, that I supposed belonged to Geronimo Apaches; and as it was now up to me either to return through that infernal canyon or fight, I determined to try a bluff. So I leveled my rifle on them and yelled to them to throw up their hands; and up went seven pair of hands accompanied by the exclamation:

"Good Indian me, me Escamarine Indian."

I told them to come up where I was in the open and to keep their hands up; which they did. There were three men, two squaws and

two girls, one about twelve years of age, and the other about sixteen or seventeen. Escam-rine had been an Apache chief, but because of his friendship for the whites, he had been deposed in favor of Geronimo, and the Government had given him this little valley, to which he had moved with his cousins, his uncles, and his aunts, and quite a number of friends, who knew there was no use to fight the whites. The men begged for tobacco, and I gave them all I had.

One of the squaws (the mother of the girls) took a fancy to my horse, and she wanted me to go to their village to see her ponies, offering me in exchange two of them for my horse; but I told her I must reach San Carlos before noon, and then by way of complimenting the oldest girl I offered to give my horse for her.

But, quick as a flash, I realized that I had made a grave mistake, as Indians know nothing about compliments and never engage in joking, and where a man offers to buy a girl, they believe he wants her, whereupon the only thing to settle is the price to be paid. The mother replied:

“Oh, no, that girl heap good girl, heap catch um fish, heap work in garden, that girl worth ten ponies.”

I told them I was in a hurry, and bid them good-by; but as I turned my horse to the trail I caught sight of that girl's face, and never

before did I see so much wrath and scorn in a human countenance; for the idea that she was not worth ten ponies was unbearable. As the whole crowd now looked mad, and I seemed to be in for a row with these friendly Indians, I was in a quandary, and did not know what to do or say. At length, believing that it was not likely I would see them again, and as it was also probable that this girl's heart would not thereby be broken, and as I was closely surrounded on all sides, I asked the mother how old the girl was. She replied that the last notch on her age rod was seventeen, and in two months more there would be another notch.

"All right," I said, "in two weeks I will come with the ponies."

At these words the girl's face fairly beamed, and she asked me where my wigwam was, to which I replied that it was just across the mountains in the big valley (a lie of course).

"Aw," she said, "there is a trail over the mountain, and I can go from your wigwam to the Escamarine village in four hours and carry a papoose, and when you come with the ponies come that way, because Geronimo Indians are sometimes in the Black Canyon, and they kill you and take the ponies."

"All right," I said; "good-by."

This girl was a beauty. She was without paint or whitewash, above medium height, weighed about one hundred and sixty pounds,

and her hair, which was cut in front about half an inch above the eyebrows, fell to her waist at the back. She had round features, a mouth like a slit in a Lodi watermelon, and was elegantly attired in raw-hide sandals and a white man's overshirt. I never saw her afterward, but I heard from her, as I will hereafter relate.

I reached San Carlos at half past eleven in the morning, but as our bid was not the lowest we did not get the contract.

On my return I did not go by the Escamareine village, but, giving it a wide berth, went up the Gila to Fort Thomas, and through the Pass north of the Graham Mountains, where the Government train, to which I have heretofore referred, had been destroyed. There was at least an acre that was white with flour, sugar, rice, and so on, while the Indians on the Reservation were grumbling and growling because their rations were shortened by this pillage.

A few hours later I met an Indian, and I stopped and prepared for business; but he took a paper out of his pocket, waved it, and kept coming. When he reached me he handed the paper to me. It stated that he was a friendly Indian, in the employ of the Government, that he should be allowed to pass, and it was signed by the commander at Fort Thomas.

CHAPTER XXIV

UNCLE BEN'S ESCAPE

I SPENT the last night of this trip in a little mining town on the eastern side of Sulphur Spring Valley called Dos Cabezos (Two Heads), so named from two lofty peaks just back of the town. About three hundred miners lived here together, as a protection against raids of the Indians.

There was a large adobe hotel at this place having a barroom about eighteen by twenty-four feet, near the center of which was a great box stove with an iron railing around it. In the evening after supper this big barroom was filled with miners, and they began telling Indian stories, the story-telling being started by a blacksmith who had had one heel amputated, because of a bullet that had been shot into it by an Apache.

He told about having been driving along the road with his partner and being ambushed by the Indians, who were concealed in mesquite brush on higher ground at their left. The horses of the blacksmith and his partner were killed by the Indians, and were then used as

breastworks while the Indians were fought back, and in retreating down the road on the run, the bullet had struck the blacksmith's heel. The blacksmith and his partner reached a small knob, close up to the mountain, which was covered with big boulders, and they hastily built a pen of these and got inside, while the Indians surrounded them and remained just out of gunshot. After it got dark the partner had crawled through the ring of Indians and reached the village about six miles away, returning at the break of day with about seventy-five men. Several of the Indians were killed, and the blacksmith and his partner had killed three of them in the skirmish the day before. This story was followed by others, which grew in size until none were believed.

An elderly man, called "Uncle Ben," sat near the stove with his feet on the railing, smoking a corncob pipe; and as he had been in that country before the American occupation, he was asked several times to tell of his experiences with the Indians. To this request he always replied that he had never had any scraps with the Indians worth telling; but the crowd was insistent, so finally Uncle Ben related the following story.

Once he and four other men were on a prospecting trip in the Dragoon Mountains, and they were going up a canyon across a little flat, about sixty feet wide. In the rainy season a small

stream ran down this canyon, but at the time to which he was referring the bed of the stream was dry sand and gravel, and about ten feet below the flat. On both sides the mountains were very steep, and well covered with timber. Without warning, he said, "there came a storm of arrows from our front, and there were so many of them we thought it best to retreat, but on turning back we discovered more Indians behind us than there were in front, and behind the trees in all directions black heads would appear, and 'zip' came the arrows. We got behind trees and rocks ourselves, and fired until our ammunition was exhausted, then got down on the sandy bed of the creek and, using our rifles as war-clubs, fought these black devils with desperation."

Proceeding, he told of the death of each of his companions, describing them separately and winding up with poor old Bill Jones, his partner, who got locked with a big Indian, and over and down they went, with Bill on top; but three or four hatchets quickly cut him to pieces.

"At that moment," said Uncle Ben, "I was striking an Indian over his head with my war-club, when another one made a lunge at me with his one-tined spear, which hit me in my left shoulder just under the collarbone, and came out of my back. I hit my heels against the brute I had brained with a blow from my war-club, and went over on my back. Half a dozen of

these black devils then pounced upon me and stretched my hands and feet out and ran their spears down through them into the sand."

By this time Uncle Ben's pipe had gone out, and he scratched match after match, until he finally got it going again. All the while there was perfect silence, for everybody was waiting for the finish of the yarn. Yet none came. Uncle Ben just smoked and smoked. At length some one sitting behind him said:

"Well, Uncle Ben, how did you get away?" Uncle Ben turned to him and answered:

"Young man, you must have gone crazy. I did not get away—the —— killed me."

CHAPTER XXV

AN APACHE WAR DANCE

I MADE a trip to the valley of the Little Colorado in the early 80's, for the purpose of buying stock cattle for my Sulphur Spring Valley ranch. It was a journey of two hundred miles, and Geronimo was again in the Sierra Madre Mountains, while his scouts were on the route between that point and San Carlos, stealing and murdering.

I traveled from Tombstone to the Sulphur Spring Valley on the road that passes between the Dragoon Mountains and the Whetstone Mountains,—as that pass was three miles broad and mostly clear of brush,—reaching the Hooker ranch, opposite Fort Grant, where I spent the night.

The next day I reached Fort Thomas, at the Gila. San Carlos is down the river about forty miles from Fort Thomas in a northwesterly direction, and the land along the river at this point is level and fertile, and about a mile and a half wide,—the road running along the southern edge of the level land, close to a range of bluffs about sixty feet high.

On going down this road the next day, when about ten miles from San Carlos I came to an old river channel, about one hundred feet wide and twenty feet deep, the banks of which were worn down so that one could ride in and out at any point, as far as I could see. Great sycamore and cottonwood trees along this channel shut off a view of the country beyond, but upon reaching this channel I heard the strangest noise I had ever heard. I stopped and listened, then I concluded to ride across the channel and see what caused this sound. And let me observe just here that this is not the first time a man has got himself into trouble by sticking his nose into other men's business; for, upon reaching the level land beyond the channel, I found myself within thirty yards of an Indian war dance.

Two logs, about two and a half feet apart, held between them a fire, which had been well burned down, and scraps of iron, wagon-tires, and axles had been laid across these logs, on top of which the carcass of a mule was being roasted, and there were about forty men, with alternate stripes of red and black in perpendicular lines on their faces, marching around the fire and chanting,—not in unison, for every one yelled as he pleased, leaping into the air and brandishing weapons in illustration of how they would cut the white men's heads off. These were the recruits for Geronimo's army. Out-

side this dance ring was another ring of about five hundred Indians,—including men, women and children,—who sat on the ground, and just back of this second ring across from where I was, two posts had been set in the ground, and a pole lashed between them, against which rifles by the dozen were leaning.

My gaze at this scene lasted but a few seconds, for about twenty of these warriors immediately caught sight of me; and knowing that, whether I was a Government scout or a rancher, I would notify the army officers, they broke for their rifles. I jerked one line of my bridle reins and poked my spur into the flank on the opposite side of my horse. The animal turned a square corner on his hind feet, and down we went on a dead run through that old channel.

Upon reaching the road, I leaned forward and plied the quirt, and was well down the road when bullets from their rifles began kicking up the dust not twenty yards behind me. At least fifteen or twenty of those Indians were standing in the road opposite the war-dance shooting at me. Notwithstanding my hurried glance at the war dance, I had observed a large number of horses hitched at the edge of the timber along the old channel where it meandered to the north, and I feared trouble from that quarter; so I kept my eyes in that direction, and very soon at least twenty-five of these Indians were on their horses, giving chase. They must have known

that unless I was overtaken I would report what I had seen to the army officers, and as a result every one of these recruits would be killed before they reached the Mexican line; because every military post on the way would be watching for them.

I was not alarmed at the Indians on horseback, for they were now north,—a mile away. My horse weighed about 1,100 pounds, was only five years old and fast, and, while I kept up a lively lope, I saved his wind for the last lap.

When the Indians came out of the timber they were in a bunch, but by the time we had run a mile, all but four of them had given up the chase and stopped. These four, however, were getting a little too close. I now let my horse out at his top speed, and had no difficulty in leaving them, because their horses had run at top speed from the start, and at least a half-mile of that run had been on rough ground before they reached the road; so they now all gave up the chase.

It was five miles now to San Carlos, which I reached in safety; but my horse was still white with foam. Here I found what you might call a corral of about two acres fenced in with an adobe wall, four feet thick and sixteen feet high. The Government buildings were inside, while a door twenty inches wide afforded the only entrance. Upon informing the guard at the door

that I wanted to see the commander, he replied:

“Oh, another scared rancher. He will not see you.”

I asked the guard to inform the commander that I had a letter to be shown at any of the military posts, entitling me to pass on my way. He did this, and this gained me admission.

The General, a fine-looking man with iron gray hair, was sitting at his desk, and looking up with a smile, said:

“I suppose you have seen a band of burros in the mirage and thought they were Indians; the ranchers keep us sending soldiers out on some such bugaboo stories.”

I simply handed him the letter, and upon observing that it was from Hooker of Sulphur Spring Valley, he remarked that he was an old friend of his, and he asked me what I had to report. I then told him what I have just related.

Without a word to me, he turned to his telegraph operator and dictated a telegram to the commander at Fort Grant, ordering him to watch the Pass north of the Graham Mountains, and another to the commander at Fort Thomas to watch the river bottom and the rolling hills to the north.

The General was very angry, and striking his desk with his fist, declared that his scouts, whose duty it was to watch that section of the country, had probably been asleep in the shade,

and he would see that they were given some shade in the guard house.

As darkness came, the commander at Fort Thomas sent out a hundred soldiers, fifty of whom went into the hills to the north, and fifty to the river bottom. This fertile river bottom was covered with tall blade grass, weeds and mesquite brush from three to four feet high, and there was a broad trail through it, which two scouts were sent down the river to watch, and when they heard the Indians coming they returned and reported, whereupon the fifty men concealed themselves in the weeds about ten feet from the trail, and when the Indians came along, these soldiers sprang to their feet and killed them all, with the exception of one who was at the rear and out of reach of the bullets.

CHAPTER XXVI

SEEING THE COUNTRY

THERE was a good military wagon road from San Carlos to Fort Apache and Verde in the White Mountains, but at Globe City, thirty-five miles to the north, there was a man I wanted to see, and I went there expecting to return to San Carlos; but I did not.

Here I made the acquaintance of some butchers, two of whom were going on a cattle-buying expedition, and as I was looking for stock cattle, we concluded to travel together by a trail that would save about thirty-five miles, instead of going back out of our way to get to the wagon road. The trail from Globe City ran nearly east for many miles over a rough country, with narrow grassy mesas and deep brushy canyons, to the foot of a high mountain lying west of the Black River, which stream ran nearly north at that point. Upon reaching the summit of this mountain we came to an Indian "book" which must have been hundreds of years old, for it was now thirty feet in diameter and nearly five feet high in the center. These "books" are found at promi-

ment points along Indian trails, and if a passing Indian wants to let his friends know when he passed, when he will return, or,—in war time,—if he has seen the enemy, he secures a lot of little sticks, or heavy spears of grass, and places them on this “book” in such a manner as to be intelligible to the others; then he places little stones about the size of a walnut, or a hen’s egg, upon these sticks, or spears of grass, to keep them from being displaced by the wind; and, as generations pass, the “book” continues to grow.

The eastern slope of the mountain was very steep, heavily timbered, and the trail zigzagged through rough canyons. We therefore did not reach the river until after sundown, and here we went into camp.

The next morning we had to cross the river, which on our side had a long sandy beach, the depth of the water increasing gradually, while the bank on the other side was perpendicular and about ten feet high, with a place cut down to the water’s edge, of sufficient width for a horseman to pass. About seventy-five yards below this “outcome,” on the other side, was a fall of at least one foot in three, filled with bowlders from ten to twenty feet in diameter, around which the water swirled in milky foam that sparkled in the sunlight.

We started into the river well above the outcome,—my companions in the lead,—and when

about twenty-five yards from the outcome the bottom fell out, and while my companions got through all right, my horse went down like a rock, taking me with him. When we came to the surface I slipped off his back and caught hold of his tail, and got him headed for the east bank. Along this bank there was a belt of willows which came close to the edge of the water, and while my horse got his front feet in among these willows, the water was so deep that his hind feet did not touch the bottom, and there he stood up as straight as a man. I caught hold of the horn of the saddle with one hand and the willows with the other, and took a rest; and I was now surprised to see that we were only about sixty feet above a cataract. My companions came with their picket ropes, which they tied together, and they then put a loop over my horse's head, fixing it so that it would not choke him. Then, as I pushed my horse away from the bank, my companions pulled both horse and me through the deep water, I clinging to the pommel of the saddle, and we were finally landed safely at the outcome.

After drying my clothes and reloading my rifle and pistol, we started on up the stream. My companions had had a little drawing made by a man who had been over the trail, but he had failed to delineate a small stream that entered the Black River, about five miles above

this crossing, and by mistake we followed this small stream.

On our right, to the south, there was a high ridge heavily timbered, which was fairly alive with wild turkeys, while on our left were low rolling hills heavily grassed. The stream up which we were traveling kept getting smaller, and we began to think our drawing must be wrong, but we continued on, and shortly after sundown came to the head of this stream, which was in a broad flat of about one hundred acres.

At the upper end of this flat we observed some smoke, and we immediately concluded that it was an Apache camp fire. But by slipping around on the north side of the flat and taking observations, we discovered no Indians in sight; and we then ascertained that, while it was an Indian fire, it had been recently deserted. There were two green poles about five inches apart, with a smoldering fire between them, and a row of rocks about six inches in diameter, hot and ready for use. The Indians make water-tight baskets, into which they put their food to cook,—whether it be beef, turkeys, or manzanita berries and grasshoppers. Into the basket they then put a hot rock, and when the heat gets low they put this rock back over the fire and replace it with a hot one. We had a very light supper, as we had expected by this time to reach Fort Apache, and after picketing our horses two of our company slept while the

third watched, taking turns. But we were not disturbed.

The next day we reached Fort Apache, where I handed my letter to the commander, and told him of the business of myself and companions. He gave us necessary directions and said that it would be perfectly safe to where we were going, but that on our way back we should not fail to call on him, as it might not then be safe to travel south.

The next day we crossed the White Mountains. It was the second day of May, and the snow was ten feet deep at the summit. On the northern slopes at that point the timber consisted of poplar, ash and tamarack, the altitude being too high for pine or oak, while on the eastern slope toward the valley there were long, smooth spurs, with grass on the south and timber on the north. The valley is about eighty miles long and forty-five miles wide, and the soil from the foot of the mountain to the little Colorado River is thin and gravelly and growing short gramma grass fit only for sheep pasture. It is sparsely inhabited by a population of which nine-tenths are Mormons, and tenths as poor as the soil.

We reached St. Johns, the county seat of Apache County, at sundown. St. Johns was composed exclusively of adobe buildings,—some of them covered with earth, and others with shingles, and at that time boasted a popu-

lation of about 1,200. At each ranch there were several houses, in each of which was a wife with a flock of babies, and all getting ready for the war to maintain polygamy.

The next morning my companions and I started,—they going to the northeast while I went to the northwestern part of the valley. I went to the foot of a high ridge (a spur of the White Mountains), from which elevation I could see the entire valley, which appeared to be surrounded by mountains; and I wondered how the river got out. The owner of the ranch at this point was a Mormon,—who had four houses, four wives, and children enough to make a full company, officers and all, in case of war,—and he informed me that there was a box canyon, only a mile away, through which the water passed to the main Colorado River, thirty-five miles away. I wanted to go up and see this canyon, but he told me it was dangerous to go near it, as a little slide of earth might come and carry me down three or four thousand feet, and that he had been compelled to build a fence to keep his cattle from falling in when they were grazing in that part of the country. I was eager, however, to go, and he pointed out the trail.

Upon arriving at the fence he had referred to, I tied one end of my picket rope around one of my ankles, and then carried the other end around one of the fence posts, and, holding the

rope in my hands, crawled towards the edge of the abyss, paying out the rope as I went. I could make but a poor guess as to the distance to the bottom, but I presume this Mormon was correct. The roar of the water, as it leaped over perpendicular falls and impinged against huge boulders, was deafening. I carefully crawled back to the fence, keeping the rope taut as I went, and, as it was now noon, I sat down under a big oak. While eating my lunch I endeavored to figure out how the Powers that Be had made such a country as this, and my conclusion was this:

Away back in the dim twilight of the past, the Colorado ran along the surface of the country, and this valley constituted a lake about one hundred miles long and sixty miles wide, covering the high benches. Then a large river had passed over this saddle in the mountain and joined the Colorado River, and as that stream cut its way down into the bedrock formation, its tributaries did the same. During the centuries that this lake was in existence, little streams, pouring into it from all sides, carried decayed vegetation and silt till there probably must have been a deposit twenty-five feet in depth at the bottom. But, as the Little Colorado cut its way toward bedrock to meet similar action on the part of the large river, the lake had been drained, and as every raindrop moved a particle of this fertile deposit toward

the center, it had all been carried away to the Gulf of California, leaving nothing but the poor gravelly soil, now tilled by the Mormons. It was easy to believe that this must have taken untold thousands of years, for a huge job was involved, and all those little streams, as they came down from the mountains on all sides, had cut channels across the mesas in solid bedrock, from the foot of the mountain to the river, and from two hundred to four hundred feet deep.

I reached my hotel at eight o'clock that evening, and here again joined my former companions, and the next day we traveled to the southeastern part of the valley. We came to a canyon, which for a distance of twelve miles was approximately four hundred feet deep, and at one place as this canyon had been worn down, and at a point about two hundred feet from the upper surface, there was a stratum of soft rock about twenty feet thick, in which we found a cave about twenty feet high, two hundred feet deep and three-quarters of a mile long. It seemed probable that a jam of logs or other construction had blocked the far end of the cave, and the water had then been turned back into its old channel, and had worn its way down two hundred feet more to the present bottom of the canyon.

About twenty feet back from the front, there was a wall four feet thick, composed of slate rock, each piece of which was not too large for

a man to handle, and there was no ledge of slate rock nearer than twelve miles from this cave. This wall extended the entire length of the front of the cave (three-quarters of a mile), and every hundred feet there was an entrance four feet wide and four feet high, arched over at the top. Having no lanterns and no shields to protect our faces from being struck by the swarm of bats flying about this cave, we did not enter to investigate; but as I stood contemplating this former abode of man I reflected that millions of years ago inhabitants of just such caves as this built canals which, though they can now be followed with difficulty, are distinct enough to show that the grades were as perfect as they could be made by the engineers of the present day. The tooth of time has mutilated or destroyed most of those things that exhibit the skill and resources of the Cliff Dwellers, but enough remains to prove that the present day has no monopoly upon either human ingenuity or intelligence, for these ancient artisans planned and built, cultivated the soil, and loved, hated, and fought precisely as we do.

At a settlement, in an extension of the main valley, we mentioned this big cave to a gentleman, and he informed us concerning its interior. He told us that midway between the entrances in the front wall there were walls two feet thick extending to the back end of the cave, and that each one of these walls or partitions had a door

in it, or an entrance similar to the ones in the front wall; that in the lapse of centuries the accumulations of the droppings from the bats was a foot deep on the floors, and that in each of the separate compartments there was a mound about a foot above the level, which, when opened, was found to contain coal ashes, stones axes, and hammers, pottery, arrow-heads, and petrified human bones.

We attended a dance at this settlement the night we were there. It was held in an adobe building about sixty feet long and about twenty feet wide, with a partition in the center, the floor being made of puncheon (boards four feet long,—split instead of being sawed). Not having been yet introduced to any of the ladies, I had not joined in the dance, and gave this as a reason when asked by one of the promoters why I had not danced. He informed me that it was not customary there to introduce anybody, but just to get your eye on some lady and ask her to dance, and it would be all right. I told him I did not have sufficient “cheek” to do this. He asked me who I cared to dance with, and I answered:

“That brunette near the farther end of the row.”

“Brunette? brunette?” he repeated. “There is no lady here by that name.”

Then I pointed at the lady with long black curls, and we were introduced and danced to-

gether. She wore a cheap Dolly Varden, with print flowers as large as a man's hand while about her neck was a red ribbon, on which was suspended a looking-glass about the size of a half-dollar, and as she wore men's brogan shoes it is needless to say that we made the puncheon rattle.

CHAPTER XXVII

PRESENTIMENTS

THE following day I went back to Fort Apache, on my way to Tombstone, and here I called on the General to inquire whether it would be safe for me to travel south. He replied that he considered it safe as far as Camp Cramer on Ash Creek plain, and he gave me a letter to Captain Cramer, telling him to direct me, if it were safe to travel, and if not, to hold me there until it was.

It was forty miles to Camp Cramer, but there was a good military wagon road, with a light grade for five miles through heavy timber to a high undulating grassy mesa which extended for many miles. Approaching the Ash Creek plains, I went down a long canyon, through which trickled a small stream of water, that ultimately passed through Camp Cramer at the northern edge of the plain, which is about forty miles long and ten miles wide, and which is located at the head waters of the San Carlos River.

Camp Cramer is an ideal place for a camp, and as you approach it, it very much resembles

an old orchard; but the trees are white oak, about two feet in diameter and twenty to fifty feet apart, with no underbrush. The little stream running through it sinks in the plain, except in the winter season, when there is sufficient rainfall to carry the water to the San Carlos River. The plain is well grassed and has high mountains on both sides, with numerous springs at their feet. I presented my letter to Captain Cramer, and after reading it carefully, he arranged for me to remain there overnight, telling me not to leave in the morning without seeing him.

The next morning I called on him and again asked him if he thought it safe for me to pursue my journey. He replied that "no news was good news," and he had not heard from his scouts in the mountains, who could look across the plain into the canyons on the opposite side. He told me it was forty miles to San Carlos in a southwesterly direction, and then it would be forty miles up the Gila in a southeasterly direction, to Fort Thomas. The latter place, however, he informed me, was less than forty miles from Camp Cramer, and that, by going by the trail over the mountain, half of the distance could be saved. He also said that the trail across the plain was not very distinct, and that I might lose it, but that I would pick it up on the east side of "that knob with timber on it" (pointing diagonally across the plain), which

was eighteen or nineteen miles away. He added that when I got there, I should go around the knob to the west, and there I would find Antelope Spring, with plenty of grass for my horse to graze on while I ate my lunch.

I reached this spring just before noon, and as I was not hungry I concluded to lie down and take a rest and to allow my horse to graze for a little while, and then to eat my lunch on the way and drink from my canteen. I gave the horse the length of the picket rope and lay down, but I had a presentiment of danger, and was impressed with the idea that I should not remain there. Because of this knob, I could not see along the foothills to the east; but I climbed to the top, and there were no Indians in sight. After doing this I climbed another spur that came down into the plain just below the spring, and there were no Indians to be seen there. I then returned to the spring and again lay down, but I could not dismiss the idea that danger was near; so I filled my canteen, mounted my horse, and was away on the lope.

After going about half a mile I met two miners,—both young men from Michigan,—on horseback, with two mules packed with a regular miner's outfit, grub, and tools. They inquired of me the distance to Camp Cramer, and also asked if there was any water on the way, saying that, in coming up the steep south

side of the mountains, it had been terrible hot, that their stock wanted water, that their canteens were empty and they very thirsty. Still oppressed with the idea of danger at Antelope Spring, I told them that there was no water along the trail, but that they could get water at Camp Cramer; whereupon they asked me if I could not spare them a drink out of my canteen. I handed my canteen to them, asking them to leave just enough for a drink when I reached the top of the mountain. Upon putting the canteen to his lips the first one took a good look at me and said:

“This water did not come from Camp Cramer this hot day, for it is cold, and the can is full; what is the reason you do not tell us where we can get water?”

The fact is that I was fearful of danger at Antelope Spring, and knowing that these men would stop there if I informed them where it was, I had determined to deceive them. I now said to them that it was for their sake that I had not informed them about the spring, but I finally told them that, if they would do as I directed, I would tell them where the spring was. To this they agreed. I then told them why I had left the spring, and as I had anticipated, they had a good laugh over it, calling me an old fogey. I then directed them to where the spring was, and cautioned them not to remain there but to leave as soon as they had watered

their stock, and to get out at least a mile on the plain, where they could see around them, and rest and graze their stock there.

We now parted,—I going on up the canyon, and the two men down toward Antelope Spring, singing, “The Old Oaken Bucket.” The very next day I learned that, within fifteen minutes after we separated, both of these men had been shot to death by Indians at Antelope Spring.

It appears that soon after I left Camp Cramer a Government scout had reported there that about forty Apache warriors had been discovered sneaking along the ridge between the Gila River and the Ash Creek plain, and going in the direction of Antelope Spring, and this gang of cutthroats had evidently reached Antelope Spring within a very few minutes after I had left there.

Some years afterwards, in relating this incident to a friend of mine, I referred to my conduct as simply extra caution; but he said he would call it an extraordinary hunch.

CHAPTER XXVIII

ARIZONA POLITICS

LIVING at Tombstone was a certain gentleman, whom I will call Brown (that was not his name), who had been Police Judge of Tombstone for two years, and an election was at hand, in which Brown was a candidate to succeed himself. There was being published at that time in Tombstone a daily paper called the *Tombstone Clarion*, and on the very day before election it came out with a big headliner stating that Colonel Brown was a patron of the "Bird Cage," a very notorious and,—as I am reliably informed,—an exceedingly questionable resort.

Very much like the miner who was struck in the belly with a sandstone specimen, Colonel Brown was doubled up like a jackknife by this editorial blast, and gave up the fight, saying that such an article would kill anybody's chances, if there were no reply, and that there was not sufficient time within which to make a reply.

It happened that that very night a big Republican rally was to be held, and the meeting was to be addressed by the candidate for Terri-

torial Delegate to Congress as well as the local candidates for other offices.

Colonel Brown though a Republican candidate positively refused to attend this meeting, but about a dozen of his friends went to his office and practically forced him to put on his hat and overcoat. Then they hustled him downstairs and over to the theater and out on the stage, upon which all of the candidates for office, to be voted for the next day, were seated. After all the other candidates had finished their speeches, there were loud and persistent calls from all parts of the audience for Colonel Brown, and they were kept up and increased in violence, until they could not be ignored; whereupon the Colonel stepped before the footlights.

He was very tall, a little stooped, and had a head as bare as a doorknob. After walking nervously back and forth across the front of the stage two or three times, running his fingers over his bald head, as if in search for a stray hair, he began:

“Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen: I am not here for the purpose of charging that my distinguished opponent for the office of Police Judge is the butt-cut of original sin, nor that he is a dirty, mangy, lousy dog, and a disgrace to his own fleas, nor do I assert that he is a squint-eyed, consumptive liar, with a breath like a buzzard, and a record like a convict, for I re-

gard him as a highly estimable gentleman, but in this morning's issue of the *Tombstone Clarion* I am directly accused of being a patron of the 'Bird Cage.' I here and now repudiate and deny the infamous inference which this editorial seeks to convey; but far be it from me to engage in any endeavor to mislead or deceive the good people of this city. I am frank to admit that at one time I did visit the 'Bird Cage,' but I want it distinctly understood that on that particular occasion *my wife was in Texas.*"

The walls and rafters of that big building shook with the tumult caused by this naïve declaration on the part of the Colonel, and when order had been restored, and after the Colonel had again walked three or four times across the stage, still running his fingers over his dome of thought, he continued:

"When my wife was at home, it was always my custom to leave my office at about six o'clock in the evening, and to either entertain my friends at my home or call upon them at their home; but after my wife went to visit her friends in Texas, I found it so lonesome at the house that I generally spent my evenings at the office and entertained my friends there. Upon the evening to which the *Morning Bladder*, otherwise known as the *Tombstone Clarion*, refers, at about ten o'clock I was passing the 'Bird Cage,' and as I had had so many cases

brought before me, involving crimes committed in that den of iniquity, I thought I would drop in and see just what kind of a place it was. So I forthwith procured a ticket and entered.

“Directly in front sat the audience, and beyond I saw the stage, while to my left there was a bar from which about a half dozen bar-maids, carrying little trays, were filling orders and delivering drinks to the patrons. From this bar, and extending to the stage, there was a row of boxes, while, on the opposite side, a similar row of boxes extended the entire length of the room. In front of these boxes, and for the obvious purpose of concealing the inmates, curtains were hung, and if the occupants had even a little pride left they of course did not wish to be seen, and the curtain would be down. If the man had still a small spark of self-respect left, he might draw back the edge of the curtain nearest the stage, so that he could witness the performance, while at the same time running the risk of being seen himself; but if he did not care for his reputation, or had none to care for, and had lost all self-respect, the curtain was drawn entirely back. And behold! In one of those wide open boxes, and to my utter amazement, I observed the editor of the *Tombstone Clarion*, while upon his knee sat the notorious female character known as ‘Brick Top,’ whom I have been compelled to send to jail no less than eight times for being drunk and dis-

orderly ; and, to make matters still more abominable and nauseating, my distinguished friend, the editor and his boon companion 'Brick Top,' were swilling *stale* beer."

The next day Colonel Brown buried his opponent beneath an avalanche of votes.

CHAPTER XXIX

A REMINDER OF A FOOL BARGAIN

It will be remembered that, on my way to San Carlos to bid for the supplying of beef cattle, I had made a proposition to some Escamarine Indians to exchange ten ponies for a young Indian girl.

I was now running a dairy of one hundred cows at the foot of the Dragoon Mountains, about twelve miles from Tombstone, and about a quarter of a mile away from the road that led across the Sulphur Spring Valley to the timber country in the mountains to the east.

One morning about ten o'clock we found a wagon loaded with lumber, standing in this road near the point where it made the turn toward our house. The teamster lay on the ground dead, but still warm, and the harness was scattered all about. Footprints indicated that this butchery had been caused by Indians concealed behind clumps of mesquite brush near the road. The Indians in that country would at times remain quiet for months, and then, without warning, they would suddenly swoop down upon the unprepared ranchers or freight-

ers. By agreement among the ranchers the mayor was to be informed of the presence of Indians when discovered, and he in turn would send word to the nearest military post and the citizens generally, whereupon horsemen would be sent out in a hurry to inform white people living out in the country.

I had with me at this dairy, besides my son Frank, one Mexican and two Swiss. I sent the Mexican with a note to the Mayor, and sent the Swiss boys to bring in the cows; but these men were so alarmed that as soon as they got out of sight they fled for town, and as a result Frank and I had to do the milking. We were able to bring in ninety-nine of the cows (one of them being missing), and, with a rifle lying down at our side, completed the milking of these ninety-nine cows at nine o'clock that night, when Frank started for town with the milk.

Knowing that if another band of Indians came along in the night they would probably burn down the house and shoot me as I endeavored to escape, I took a pair of blankets and my rifle and went out on the plain, where I crawled into a clump of mesquite brush and remained until Frank's return, about ten o'clock the next morning,—the three hired men coming with him.

My missing cow had been purchased by me on the opposite side of the valley, and thinking

that perhaps she had started for her old home and might stop at some water hole in the center of the valley, I saddled the best horse I had, taking my rifle with me, and started out to search for her.

On the way I avoided patches of brush or low swags in the plain, and just before reaching some low land I passed down a small ravine about forty yards long. Being unable to see but a short distance ahead, I took my rifle from its scabbard, which hung to the pommel of the saddle, and held it pointed along the trail in front of me. In rounding a short turn, I met an Indian in precisely the same condition of preparedness. He had a red handkerchief tied around his head, and in smiling showed a set of teeth each one of which was nearly as broad as my thumbnail. He rode a big black horse,—which I afterwards learned had been stolen from one of my neighbors,—was riding without a saddle, and had a piece of rawhide for a bridle.

The trail was so narrow that only friends could pass, and as our horses came to a stop their heads were not more than five feet apart. These Indians can understand and make themselves understood.

“How do you do?” I said.

“How?” he replied.

I asked him if he had seen a big brown cow.

"No see him," he replied. In speaking, the Indian never uses the feminine gender.

By way of keeping up the conversation I asked him where he was going, and was all the time hoping that by some movement of his horse the muzzle of his rifle might be turned aside for an instant, affording me an opportunity to draw mine, but I quickly appreciated that he was on the watch for an opportunity of doing precisely the same thing. In answer to my question he replied:

"Go see my friends." I told him I could tell him where they were: they were at Willow Springs in the Whetstone Mountains, and had gone there yesterday morning. He then endeavored to get me to look in some other direction, asking:

"Where water?" I looked him straight in the eye, and I told him to go back to the low ground, turn to the right, and, by following the edge of the low ground about four hundred yards, he would come to a big spring. The "game," however, did not work, for he simply grinned and showed his big teeth.

Then, with ferocity darting from his eyes, he said:

"I think I know you."

"No!" I replied, "you never saw me before."

To this he said:

"No; me no see you. My niece he tell me. He say you go the Black canyon. You buy him ten ponies. You no go git."

I laughed and denied knowing where the Black canyon was, and said that I had never seen his niece (I now fervently wished I never had encountered that charmer), and that it must have been some other man, but he persisted:

"Me think yes. My niece he say how big you. He say hair little gray, eye heap sharp, all same eagle."

I answered that he was mistaken and added:

"Good-by."

"Good-by," he returned.

But neither of us moved an inch, whereupon I pulled on the lines with my left hand and made my horse move one step back, saying again:

"Good-by."

He did the same thing, for he was as anxious to get rid of me as I was to get rid of him, and when we had backed our horses about twenty feet each, we were out of sight of each other.

There was a little higher ground on my right, which I had to pass in returning, and I thought the Indian would make a break for it in order to get the advantage of the first shot, if I kept up the trail. In a few quick jumps I reached this high ground, and springing from my horse, waited for a black head to show itself above this little mesa; but it did not appear. After a

short wait I heard a whoop, and looking across the low ground in the direction from which the sound came, I saw the old rascal waving his red handkerchief and defying me with his “Whoo! Whoo!”

CHAPTER XXX

THE APACHE INDIAN AND HIS ATROCITIES

JOHN NOONAN lived at the mouth of a long canyon that came down from the Dragoon Mountains on the Sulphur Valley side, about ten miles from where I was then living.

During the rainy season an abundance of water for stock purposes came down this canyon, and about six feet below the surface there was plenty of water to be found at all seasons of the year.

Noonan was a stock rancher, and he had dug a well and put in a low row of watering troughs at a point about one hundred feet from the foot of a spur of the mountain, which jutted out into the valley and which was about fifty feet high and covered with bowlders. At the foot of this spur Noonan had built his cabin, and as there was no other water to be had within ten miles, his stock, consisting of about a hundred head, came home at noon to drink.

One day at noon, while the stock was at the troughs, Noonan observed about sixty Apache warriors on the plain, headed for his place. He quickly grabbed his rifle and hid up among

these big bowlders. When about half a mile distant the main body of the Indians stopped, while ten of their number came on to Noonan's cabin, each of them armed with a rifle, carried cocked and ready for use.

Upon reaching the cabin, Noonan observed one of them knock on the door, while the other nine stood ready for action, with their rifles pointing at the door. Finding no one at home, the entire band of Indians now came up and camped. They started a fire and then began to kill Noonan's cattle, roast the meat on sticks, and skin the sides of the heads for sandals. They then packed upon their horses the hind quarters of the cattle they had killed, and left the remainder of the carcasses to rot. They then shot all the balance of Noonan's cattle just to see them fall, and, incidentally, to show the whites their contempt for the race.

The Indians remained at Noonan's place until about four o'clock in the afternoon, and then, with the exception of one "buck," who had eaten more than he could carry away, they left. This straggler went to sleep, and in about an hour got up and went to the water trough and leaned over to drink with his rear pointed in Noonan's direction. The others of the gang were by this time too far away to hear a rifle shot, so Noonan drew a bead on this "buck," and the bullet went clear through, coming out at the neck below the chin. Noonan afterwards

told me he did not think the bullet struck a single bone. Noonan was advised not to remain at his place, but he disregarded this advice and re-stocked the place.

While it is said the Indian never forgets a favor, it is certain he never forgets nor forgives an injury; and two years later sixteen Indians from San Carlos killed Noonan; and I happened to be along at the time his body was found. It was riddled with bullets, unspeakably mutilated, and was lying on the floor, while upon and over it, probably to the depth of a foot, had been scattered flour, rice, ashes, pickles, syrup, sugar, beans, and other supplies, while his bunks, table, and dishes had been all smashed to pieces.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE PECK FAMILY

MR. and Mrs. Peck and a niece of the latter,—aged about twelve years,—lived six miles east of Nogales on the Arizona side of the line. Peck was a stock rancher, and one day while absent from home looking after his stock, an old Apache chief named Whoo, with his band of seventy-five cutthroats, came to Peck's house, and killed Mrs. Peck, and putting the girl on a horse behind an Indian, took her away with them.

Upon reaching a point about two miles from the ranch, they met Peck driving about ten head of cattle, which they took from him. They then bound him and lashed him to a tree, leaving his feet about two feet above the ground, piled dry wood around him, and were about to start a fire, when two Indians and a Mexican, who had lagged behind the band, came up. This Mexican was a bad character, and after committing some crime he had joined this Indian band in order to evade the law officers; but at one time he had been in Peck's employ. He now interceded for Peck, telling the Indians

that Peck was a good man, never bothered the Indians, and always took their part in any discussion in reference to them. The last part of this statement was a pure invention, but it had its effect; for Peck was immediately released.

The niece was still sitting on the horse behind the Indian, of course crying as though her heart would break, and the Mexican now began to plead for her release; but the Indians would not listen to such a proposition, as they wanted to keep her to be a wife for one of their young chiefs.

From this point the band went over the line into Mexico, and camped in a long canyon; and here, having been located by the Mexican scouts, two hundred Mexican soldiers were sent after them, and at a given signal one hundred of these soldiers attacked from the east side and the other hundred from the west.

The Indians were taken by surprise, and a large number of them were killed, but some of them on horses escaped into the timber, and among those escaping was the one who had the girl behind him.

In passing at breakneck speed over a smooth place, where the bedrock was on the surface of the ground, his horse fell, which resulted in dismounting both the Indian and the panic-stricken girl. She had sense enough left, however, to lie down behind a rock until the shooting at the Indian, as he continued on foot up

the slope, ceased; whereupon she ran down to the soldiers, who took her to Hermosillo, and sent her from there to Nogales. But as soon as she reached the ground she started on foot back for the home of her lonely uncle.

CHAPTER XXXII

AN ARIZONA ROMANCE

THERE is no fictitious nonsense about the love story I am now to relate.

Here were no purling brooks beneath ambrosial shades, no waving pines to furnish Æolian music for the weary, no laughing wavelets along a sandy beach, where lovesick swains wander when the moon is full; for there was no running water there, no timber larger than greasewood and wild sage, and no beach nearer than the Gulf of California,—two hundred and fifty miles away.

A man, whom I will call Davenport, was foreman of a gang of men in the Grand Central Mine, and he lived, with an invalid wife and daughter Agnes, in a modest white cottage on Third Street, south of Allen. Davenport was a blond, while his wife was a curly haired brunette, and Agnes, partaking of the type of both, had a profusion of long brown curls hung over her shoulders. She was not only a very attractive young woman, but was, as well, really a wonderful player of the piano.

One day the father fell down a three hundred

foot shaft, and was instantly killed on the bed-rock at the bottom. At one time he had had a bank account amounting to a few hundred dollars, but the protracted illness of his wife had steadily reduced this "nest egg," and the expenses attending his funeral used up the balance; and so, with the bread-winner of the family gone, Agnes was in almost hopeless despair.

She sought employment among the merchants, but girls were not then employed in the stores at Tombstone. Then she endeavored to organize a class in music, but the population of Tombstone had not gone to that sage-brush country to learn music but to get rich and then go back to their homes; therefore failure also met this attempt.

At that time there lived at Tombstone a man by the name of Johnson who conducted the largest gambling house in town, and while his morals may not have pleased everybody, he was widely known for his charity. No unfortunate miner ever asked Johnson for help without getting it, nor did any deserving cause fail to enlist his financial assistance. As a consequence, Johnson was known, at least by sight, to every inhabitant of Tombstone. He was tall, straight as a candle, and had dark brown hair, and when he was observed hurrying along the street, men, who would not speak to him because of his occupation, would remark:

“There goes Johnson. Some one must be sick or hurt.”

Johnson's place of business was at the corner of Allen and Fourth Street, the entrance being on Fourth Street near the corner. The room was a large one, and at the rear end there was a bar, beside which was a lunch counter, where patrons were accommodated with short orders. Farther along, across the end of the room, was a music loft,—elevated about four or five feet above the floor,—which accommodated a piano, while on the east side of the room there was a row of sofas and easy chairs. The center of the room was occupied by tables, which Johnson rented to men who were conducting banking games, monte, roulette, etc. There was no charge made for the poker tables, and the players came and went away as they got broke.

Johnson himself seldom gambled, and his income came almost altogether from the bar, the lunch counter, and the rent of the tables.

At the Davenport cottage the last meal had been eaten, and Agnes had again started uptown in search of employment, when, after going about a block, she met Johnson, whom she knew by sight. Agnes had determined upon two things. One of these was that she would not beg, and the other that she would have employment of some kind.

Upon meeting Johnson, she addressed him.

"This is Mr. Johnson, I believe," she began.

"Yes," he replied; "that is my name."

"My name is Agnes Davenport," she added.

At this Johnson asked her if she was the daughter of John Davenport, who had been killed in the Grand Central Mine. Agnes replied that she was, and went on to say that she and her mother had just eaten the last meal in the house. Johnson immediately put his hand in his pocket, but Agnes checked him by saying:

"Hold on. I am not begging,—I would rather starve than beg,—but I do want work."

Then she proceeded to tell Johnson that she had tried to sell their house and lot for enough money to take her and her invalid mother back East to their friends, but because of the bill which was then pending in Congress to repeal the Sherman Silver Purchase Act, a buyer for the cottage could not be found at any price; that she had tried to get employment in the stores, and had then tried to get up a music class, but she had only met with failure.

Johnson told her that the very reasons which had made it impossible for her to get employment would make it impossible for him to obtain employment for her, to which Agnes replied:

"I know of a place I can fill, and you can give it to me."

"What is it?" asked Johnson. "I should certainly like to know."

"I want to play the piano in your place of business," replied Agnes.

"Oh, no!" said Johnson. "That would not do at all. Think of your reputation."

"I have thought of it, and dreamed about it; but we can not eat reputation, and we must eat," replied Agnes.

"But," said Johnson, "you will hear profanity, perhaps vulgarity, and possibly now and then the crack of a pistol."

To this Agnes answered that she could make music that would drown any racket of that kind.

Johnson gazed at the ground reflectively for a few seconds before saying:

"Very well, if you want to try the place, you may consider yourself engaged, and your wages will be eight dollars per night. You must be there at eight o'clock in the evening, and remain until the place is closed, which may be at any time from midnight until sunrise; but your wages will be the same whether the time is long or short, and they will be paid to you every night at closing time."

Agnes thanked him profusely, and then said to him that now that she had employment she wished to borrow the amount of one night's wages. Whereupon Johnson handed her a ten dollar gold piece on account. He then told her that he wanted her to go now to his place of

business, so that he could hear some of the music she had told him about,—music that would drown the crack of a pistol.

They entered the barroom, and Johnson, with Agnes following him, elbowed his way among the tables and gamblers, with which the place was well filled, and on up to the music loft. Agnes ran her fingers lightly over the keys, and then struck up a piece called “A Storm at Sea,”—a good representation of the thunder made by great rollers breaking upon a rockbound coast.

The loungers on the sofas and easy chairs leaned forward, holding their cigars between their fingers, and listened; the man behind the bar spilled the liquor he was serving; while the cook behind the lunch counter let the beefsteak burn, and the gamblers about the tables, with their money piled up and their cards in their hands, sat spellbound as they gazed in the direction of the music loft.

After Agnes had finished the piece, Johnson told her that that would do very well, whereupon Agnes said to him, as the music loft was wide open, that during her rest moments some of these objectionable men would very likely be coming up to the loft, and unless some friend of hers should call, she very much preferred to be alone. It was therefore arranged that if any undesirable person obtruded himself, Agnes was to strike certain notes as a signal, whereupon either Johnson or the barkeeper, if

Johnson should be absent, would remove the objectionable person from the music loft. Agnes also made the request that no man who drank or played cards should be introduced to her, as they would also likely be coming to the loft. This was agreed to, whereupon Johnson led the way to the door, and bid Agnes good-day.

He then turned to the crowd around the tables, who had not returned to their play but were waiting to hear from Johnson as to who she was and where he found her. Johnson informed them that she was a lady, and that any man who spoke to her without an introduction would be ejected from the place, and that whoever spoke an improper word to her would not live to get out. He then told them that she was poor, and was working to earn sufficient money to take her invalid mother back east to their friends; that she was to be treated with respect, and when she was going in or out of the room they were to stand aside and permit her to pass.

Agnes' playing proved a great drawing card for Johnson's gambling place, and there were many men who had never entered such a place before who now called to listen to the music; and, as they did not drink, they either bought cigars or patronized the lunch counter.

Agnes had a few male friends who used frequently to call and chat with her during her

rest moments, but her friends among the women were not so charitable, and had deserted her completely, and in meeting her upon the street they would turn their faces heavenward and gaze into the clouds or at the stars. Agnes had been a great favorite, especially with the churches, which wanted her in their choirs, and hitherto no social gathering had been complete without her presence, due to her singing and her playing. At all the picnics in the grove at the foot of the Dragoon Mountains it had been the same. Now, however, she was pointed out on the streets as "the girl who plays the piano at Johnson's gambling place."

Regardless of all criticism, the big gambling house continued to prosper and flourish, and the "wicked" Johnson still kept up in his work of charity.

Many were the applicants, among Johnson's regular patrons, for an introduction to Agnes; but they all knew that the drinker and the gambler were barred, and all Johnson needed to reply was: "No. I saw you playing for money," or, "I saw you at the bar a little while ago."

There was a blacksmith by the name of John Gibson, who conducted a shop on Fremont Street. He was about twenty-five years old, a little below medium height, had dark brown hair, and a right arm made hard as steel by his work upon the anvil.

Attracted by the music, Gibson dropped into

Johnson's place one evening, and he was so taken with either the music or the musician that he became a regular attendant. He at length asked Johnson for an introduction to Agnes, and as his greatest sin consisted of smoking, his request was granted, and he chatted with her a few moments during her rest time, and had the good sense to leave when it was time for the music to begin again.

He now became not only a regular attendant at Johnson's but a frequent caller upon Agnes, and in time began to escort her home after the night's work was over. As this sometimes did not happen until daylight, Gibson found that his late hours very much interfered with his work in the shop the next day. He was now becoming really very much interested in Agnes, and he contrived to go to bed very early, and to get up at midnight, when he would repair to Johnson's and wait for Agnes until the place closed up, when he would escort her safely home.

William Billings was a patron of Johnson's bar, and he gambled in a small way. He was not, I think, a heavy drinker, but with a few drinks he seemed to be irresistibly attracted to the music loft; and there he went on more than one occasion. Each time Agnes gave the agreed signal, whereupon either Johnson or the barkeeper came to the loft and removed the objectionable Billings.

On the particular night to which I am about to refer, Johnson's place closed a few minutes before midnight, and Billings, somewhat in liquor, was on the sidewalk when Agnes came out on her way home. He accosted her and invited her to go across the street with him to a restaurant to have a cup of coffee before she went home. She made no reply but started walking rapidly down the street; whereupon Billings caught her by the arm and pulled her from the sidewalk, as he again invited her to go to the restaurant.

At this psychological moment John Gibson came around the corner, and immediately realized the situation. He hurried to Agnes' side, and instantly that strong right arm shot out with the impulse of a trip-hammer, struck Billings on the temple, and felled him like an ox.

On the way to Agnes' home hardly a word had been said by either her or Gibson, but as she bid him good-night, at the door, John finally discovered that he had a tongue, and his reply was:

"Not yet. I want to talk to you a few minutes."

Proceeding, he told her that she had worked in that place long enough, and that some night, when he did not happen to be around, she would get into some serious trouble. Agnes replied that she had not worked there quite long enough,

but that in ten days more she would have enough money to take her mother back East in a palace car.

"But," said John, "I have a proposition to make to you."

"Is it better than eight dollars a night?" she asked.

After a laugh, John answered:

"I do not think you would get eight dollars every night, but it would be better than that in the long run. I propose right now to go to the residence of the County Clerk and get a marriage license. Then I will come back for you, and we will go to the Magistrate and get married."

To this Agnes replied that she did not believe in pulling people out of bed at that time of night, but that if he would come around at ten o'clock in the morning she would be ready. Agreed!

At ten o'clock the next morning John Gibson was in jail, and Agnes was being subpoenaed as a witness at the inquest to be held by the coroner upon the body of Billings.

As Billings had dropped to the ground, the back of his neck struck on the corner of the plank sidewalk curbing, his neck was broken, and he died almost instantly.

At the coroner's inquest Agnes gave her testimony, as did also three other eyewitnesses, and

the following verdict was returned by the coroner's jury:

"We, the jury impaneled and sworn in this case, do find that the name of the deceased was Willing Billings, that he was a miner by occupation, and residing at Tombstone, Arizona. We further find that he came to his death by *a fall*."

Gibson was liberated, he and Agnes were married that afternoon, and within a few days they, with Agnes' invalid mother, left for the northwest.

Three years later I met a gentleman who knew them in their new home. Gibson was still pounding iron, while Agnes was looking after the house and playing the organ in the Episcopal church. A little black-eyed Agnes was keeping them company.

EPILOGUE

The repeal of the Sherman Silver Purchase Act put a crimp in silver mining in Arizona as well as elsewhere, and the busiest day that ever dawned upon Tombstone was now at hand. From mines that had been employing thousands of men the pumping plants were being hoisted to the surface to be cleaned, greased, and either stored away or shipped to other sections, where they could be used in the gold mines. The sixteen-mule teams, which had been taxed to the utmost in hauling silver ore to the mills, were now started on their last trip, while the drivers were wondering where they could get new employment. The merchants were repacking their stocks of merchandise for shipment to other places, while in the residential section of the city there was an incessant din of hammers as the furniture and household effects were being boxed and crated for removal. The doors and windows were now the most valuable parts of a house, because they could be carried away for use elsewhere. In fine, what had been the thriving city of Tombstone took on the resemblance of an army breaking camp, and everybody seemed anxious to get away.

With many others I trekked northward, and ultimately again reached the Salinas Valley, where I have since resided. Events have proved that all of my experiences worth noting were to end in Arizona, for since I left there not an incident in my life has been worth setting down.

In this retrospect of a life now far exceeding the allotted span of three score years and ten, I am fortunate in the possession of a memory that, with astonishing clearness, brings before me the varying incidents, both pleasant and unpleasant, of all those bygone days.

In common with the great generality of mankind, the sun has often brightened, and clouds have at times obscured and darkened, my pathway toward the setting sun.

Some of my experiences were not altogether pleasant, and others of them I would avoid if I were to go over the route a second time. But now I am approaching the end of the long trail, with neither misgiving nor discontent, feeling quite well assured that, everything considered, I have had a pretty good time after all.

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